

THE MONTH

NOVEMBER 1949

THE AMERICAN EPOCH IN THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Evelyn Waugh

ENGLISH PAINTING
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY—II

John Rothenstein

THE POPULATION PROBLEM

John Russell

THE FIRST THING AND THE LAST

Jean Daniélou

BROADCASTING GRAMOPHONE NOTES
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Seán O'Faoláin, Derek Hill,
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NOTES ON NEW CONTRIBUTORS

G. K. HUNTER is at present teaching English literature at University
College, Hull.

SEÁN O'FAOLÁIN has written an essay on *The Dilemma of Irish
Letters* which will appear in a later number of **THE MONTH**. His review
in this issue is published by courtesy of Radio Eireann.

DEREK HILL is a contributor to *The Spectator*, *Orpheus*, etc.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P., is Lecturer in Italian at Cambridge.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES is Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*.

THE MONTH

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NEW SERIES

NOVEMBER 1949

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By
EVELYN WAUGH

"A.D. OR B.C.?" How often among the monuments of the Old World, the dazed sight-seer asks this question, interrupting the guide's flow of dates! How often he wearily leaves it unasked! A.D. 100 or 100 B.C.; a span of two centuries; what does that matter, one way or the other, compared with the huge, crowded interval between then and now?

For most people the birth of Christ is a chronological device, used beyond the bounds of Christendom in Delhi and Telaviv and Moscow; a date-line as arbitrary as the meridian of Greenwich. It is not even accurate, for Christ was born four or five years before the traditional date. From time to time politicians have sought to impose an exploit of their own—the first French Republic, the Fascist March on Rome—as a more notable event from which to number the years. The old calendar came back for reasons of convenience rather than piety. But the Christian, when he dates his letters from the Year of Our Lord, is affirming his Faith. He is placing the Incarnation where for him it must always stand, in the centre of human history. Before that Year of Grace man lived in the mists, haunted by ancestral memories of a lost Eden, taught enigmatically by hints and portents, punished by awful dooms. The Incarnation restored order. In place of his bloody guilt-offerings man was given a single, complete expiation; in place of his magic, the sacramental system, a regular service of communication with the supernatural; in place of his mystery-cults, an open, divinely constituted human society in which to live and multiply. All his history from then onwards, seen through Christian eyes, all the migrations of

peoples and the rise and fall of empires, comprise merely a succession of moods and phases in the life of that society, the Church Christ founded.

In this deep perspective it seems that in every age some one branch of the Church, racial, cultural or national, bears peculiar responsibilities towards the whole. Vitality mysteriously waxes and wanes among the peoples. Again and again Christianity seems dying at its centre. Always Providence has another people quietly maturing to relieve the decadent of their burden. To a Christian of the fourth century the seat of authority at Rome must have seemed almost on the frontier; France, Spain and Germany were crude, missionary countries while all that was subtle and gracious in the Faith flourished in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. For him it was barely possible to conceive of a Church which had lost Constantinople, Alexandria and Carthage. To Louis XIV the Faith of those places belonged to remote history. He could not think of Christendom without France. Yet in less than a century France was officially atheist. Challoner, the saintly Catholic leader of eighteenth-century England, would have thought it a preposterous forecast that the grandchildren of his dim, disheartened little flock would see the bishops restored and the religious orders flourishing in every county. So the battle continues, one that can never be lost and may never be won until the Last Trump. No loss is impossible, no loss irretrievable, no loss—not Rome itself—mortal. It may well be that Catholics of to-day, in their own lifetime, may have to make enormous adjustments in their conception of the temporal nature of the Church. Many indeed are already doing so, and in the process turning their regard with hope and curiosity to the New World, where, it seems, Providence is schooling and strengthening a people for the historic destiny long borne by Europe.

Hope and curiosity. At first sight hope is subdued by many features of American history and psychology. Indeed, it could be quite plausibly argued that the people of the United States were resolutely anti-Catholic. Although most of the great adventures of exploration in the new continent were made by Catholic missionaries, the first colonists (everywhere except in Maryland) were Protestants whose chief complaint against their mother country was that she retained too much traditional character in her Established Church. School textbooks do not make much

of the fact, which research abundantly proves, that it was the Quebec Act, tolerating Popery in Canada, quite as much as the Stamp Act and the Tea Duties, which rendered George III intolerable to the colonists. The Constitution-makers little thought that in separating Church and State they were laying their country open to the prodigious Catholic growth of the nineteenth century, and in recent months the Supreme Court has shown in the *McCullum* case, that the phrase may be interpreted to the Church's injury. In foreign policy, when religious questions were involved, America has usually supported the anti-Catholic side, particularly where she is most powerful, in Mexico. President Wilson did nothing to oppose the disastrous anti-Catholic prejudices of the peace-makers of 1919.

Moreover the individual qualities that are regarded as particularly characteristic of Americans, their endemic revolt against traditional authority, their respect for success and sheer activity, their belief that progress is beneficent, their welcome of novelties, their suspicion of titles and uniforms and ceremonies, their dislike of dogmas that divide good citizens and their love of the generalities which unite them, their resentment of discipline—all these and others are unsympathetic to the habits of the Church. Mr. Geoffrey Gorer has discerned deep in the American soul a psychopathic antagonism to paternity and all its symbols; Catholics call both their priests and their God, "Father." The language of the Church is largely that of the Court; her liturgy was composed in lands where the honorific titles of Royalty were accepted naturally and it abounds in phrases which sound strange on republican and democratic lips. Many pages could be filled with instances of this mind proving on paper very cogently that America can never play an important part in the life of the Church. It would be a fatuous exercise, for already at this moment Catholics are the largest religious body in the United States, the richest and in certain ways the most lively branch of the Catholic Church in the world.

Fifty years ago it even looked as though America might soon become predominantly Catholic. That hope, or fear, is now remote. Immigration from Catholic Europe has dwindled, peasant stock has lost its fertility in the cities, conversions barely keep pace with apostasies. Humanly speaking it is now certain that the Church is stabilized as a minority, the most important

in the country, but subject to both the advantages and disadvantages of an unprivileged position. There is a paradox inherent in all her history that the Church, designed in her nature to be universal, remains everywhere a minority. We are inclined to think that from the age of Constantine to that of Luther there was a single, consistently triumphant, universally respected authority and to wonder why, in fact, she made such poor use of her opportunities. In fact, of course, the Church has always been at grips with enemies inside or outside her body, has never enjoyed that serene rule her constitution expects, has repeatedly suffered disasters from which it seemed barely possible she would recover. Her position in America cannot be understood unless her previous history is kept always in mind. From time to time, from place to place she has been in hiding; and she has been on the throne. In America her problems are less simple. There she is firmly grounded in a neutral, secular state.

The United States does not form part of Christendom in the traditional sense of the word. She is the child of late eighteenth-century "enlightenment" and the liberalism of her founders has persisted through all the changes of her history and penetrated into every part of her life. Separation of Church and State was an essential dogma. Government, whatever its form, was looked upon as the captain of a liner, whose concern is purely with navigation. He holds his command ultimately from the passengers. Under his immediate authority the public rooms of his ship are used for religious assemblies of all kinds, while in the bar anyone may quietly blaspheme. That is the ideal relationship between ruler and ruled, between the individual *qua* citizen and the individual *qua* immortal soul, as conceived by doctrinaire liberals of the period when the United States were founded. Men required and tolerated very little from their government. The realm of "private life" was large and inviolable. And the division of Church and State is feasible only under those conditions. To-day in most nations the analogy between State and ship has broken down. In some places the Captain has developed the mentality of Bligh of the *Bounty*; in others the passengers have been more or less willingly pressed into the crew; all are continuously occupied in keeping the ship running; the voyage is no longer a means to an end but an end in itself. As the State, whether it consist of the will of the majority or the power of

a clique, usurps more and more of the individual's "private life," the more prominent become the discrepancies between the secular and the religious philosophies, for many things are convenient to the ruler which are not healthy for the soul.

The tragic fate of Europe is witness to the failure of secular states. But America through the unique circumstances of her growth has so far been proof against this decay and is thus the centre of hope even for those who are most critical of her idiosyncrasies.

These idiosyncrasies are now the object of boundless curiosity. A generation ago they caused mild amusement as the eccentricities of a likeable but remote people. To-day they are studied as portents of the development of the whole Western world. Catholics in particular study them, for it is a necessary consequence of the universality of the Church that she should develop marked superficial variations in her different branches. The Mass as offered in, say, St. Patrick's in New York or in a Tyrolean village or a Franciscan mission in Africa, is barely recognizable by the uninitiated as the same sacrifice. Mr. Aldous Huxley, no fool, writes in *Ends and Means*: "Christianity, like Hinduism or Buddhism, is not one religion but several. A Christian Church in Southern Spain or Mexico or Sicily is singularly like a Hindu temple. The eye is delighted by the same gaudy colours, the same tripe-like decorations, the same gesticulatory statues; the nose inhales the same intoxicating smells; the ear and, along with it, the understanding are lulled by the drone of the same incomprehensible incantations, roused by the same loud impressive music. At the other end of the scale, consider the chapel of a Cistercian monastery and the meditation hall of a community of Zen Buddhists. They are equally bare. . . . Here are two distinct religions for two distinct kinds of human beings." Only a very learned man can be quite as hopelessly and articulately wrong as that. Any altar-boy could tell him that the "incantations" of the Mass are identical whether in Guadalupe or Gethsemani, Ky, and are comprehensible or not simply so far as one understands Latin. Cistercian incense smells the same as Jesuit. There is high farce in his picture of a home-sick Andalusian in India frequenting the rites of Juggernaut in preference to the more severe devotions of the mission church. But it is palpably true that each culture gives an idiosyncratic local flavour to its church.

We differ most, perhaps, in our notions of reverence. I have seen a procession of the Blessed Sacrament in Spain which the people applauded by exploding fire-crackers under the feet of the clergy. It was done with genuine devotion, but to a Northern mind the effect was disconcerting. In the same way it strikes Europeans as odd that Americans find the voices of film stars on the radio an aid to saying the rosary. American manufacturers of "religious goods" offer many ingenious novelties, including a "rosary aid," which records each "Ave" on a dial with a sharp click, and a plastic crucifix which, I was assured, had the advantage that you could "throw it on the ground and stamp on it." But I remembered that in France I had seen children eating ginger-bread Madonnas. All these observations add to the charm of travel. But there is also "flavour" of a more philosophic kind.

Europeans are very anxious to catch the American flavour for they believe that for two or three generations it will predominate. They ask countless questions about it and get some very misleading answers, for one can find instances to give colour to almost any generalization. I saw both in London and Chicago the Italian film *Paisa*, one incident of which portrays, with fewer anomalies than usual, the life of a small Franciscan community in a remote mountain district. Three American chaplains arrive there and are warmly welcomed. It transpires that only one is Catholic, the other two being respectively a Protestant and a Jew. The friars are disconcerted and impose a fast on themselves for the conversion of their two non-Catholic guests. In London the audience was mainly non-Catholic, but its sympathy was plainly with the friars. In Chicago the audience was composed mainly of Italian speakers, presumably Catholics of a sort, and to them the friars seemed purely comic. It would be easy to generalize from this contrast that American Catholics care little for doctrinal niceties or the ascetic life; that they exalt the natural virtues above the supernatural, and considered good-fellowship and material generosity the true ends of man. That is, in fact, just the kind of generalization which is current in Europe. Yet at that very time Boston was being torn by theological controversy, a contumacious Irish priest proclaiming damnation on all heretics and the authorities reaffirming the possibility of salvation outside the Church in the orthodox terms, which are generous but strict. And all over the country monks and nuns

were quietly going about their business of the *Opus Dei*, singing their office and living by medieval rules, in just the fashion which excited laughter in a Chicago theatre.

The two chief impressions which I brought home from America were, first, that there is as great variety there between the outward forms of Catholicism as can be found in Europe, and secondly that Catholicism is not something alien and opposed to the American spirit but an essential part of it.

To enlarge on these two propositions. In vast areas of what is now the United States Catholicism was in colonial times the established religion. It was loosely established and in most of those areas now survives mainly in picturesque, ruined or restored, missions. Only two States can be said to have a strong, continuous Catholic tradition—Louisiana and Maryland. In the first of these the Church has never known persecution or even discouragement, and over a length of time that is not an entirely healthy condition. Catholics need to be reminded every few generations that theirs is a challenging creed. In no European country have the faithful been subject to so enervating a toleration as have the inhabitants of New Orleans. It is therefore not surprising that they take their faith easily and sentimentally, with some scepticism among the rich and some superstition among the poor, of the kind that was found in France before the Revolution. It is one of the Devil's devices to persuade people that their religion is so much "in their bones" that they do not have to bother; that it is in rather poor taste to talk too much about it. Marital confusions, the material advantages of secular education, the mere lassitude induced by the climate, keep many from practising their religion. There is a strange shrine there, unrecognized by the clergy, where the decoration and forms of prayer are Catholic, to which the coloured people resort for cures and favours. There is witchcraft in New Orleans, as there was at the court of Mme. de Montespan. Yet it was there that I saw one of the most moving sights of my tour. Ash Wednesday; warm rain falling in streets unsightly with the draggled survivals of carnival. The Roosevelt Hotel overflowing with crapulous tourists planning their return journeys. How many of them knew anything about Lent? But across the way the Jesuit Church was teeming with life all day long; a continuous, dense crowd of all colours and conditions moving up to the altar rails and

returning with their foreheads signed with ash. And the old grim message was being repeated over each penitent: "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." One grows parched for that straight style of speech in the desert of modern euphemisms, where the halt and lame are dubbed "handicapped"; the hungry, "under-privileged"; the mad, "emotionally disturbed." Here it was, plainly stated, quietly accepted, and all that day, all over that light-hearted city, one encountered the little black smudge on the forehead which sealed us members of a great brotherhood who can both rejoice and recognize the limits of rejoicing.

The history of Maryland has been different. Catholicism was never established there as an official religion as it was in the French and Spanish colonies. The State was founded by Catholics as a place where they could practise their religion in peace, side by side with Protestants. The peace was soon broken and the Church persecuted and subdued. But it survived and emerged at the Declaration of Independence in much the same temper as in England at the Catholic Emancipation Act. The old Catholic families of Baltimore have much in common with the old Catholic families of Lancashire. The countryside round Leonardstown has the same tradition of Jesuit missionaries moving in disguise from family to family, celebrating Mass in remote plantations, inculcating the same austere devotional habits, the same tenacious, unobtrusive fidelity. That peninsula between Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac is one of the most fascinating areas for the Catholic visitor, and one of the things which inspires him most is the heroic fidelity of the negro Catholics. The Church has not always been a kind mother to them. Everywhere in the South Catholic planters brought their slaves to the sacraments, but in the bitter years after the Reconstruction few whites, priests or laity, recognized any special obligation towards them. Often they could only practise their religion at the cost of much humiliation. Some drifted from the Church to preposterous sects or reverted to paganism, but many families remained steadfast. Theirs was a sharper test than the white Catholics had earlier undergone, for here the persecutors were fellow-members in the Household of the Faith. But, supernaturally, they knew the character of the Church better than their clergy. To-day all this is fast changing. Catholics are everywhere leading the movement to make amends and in another generation, no doubt, those

scandals will seem to belong to the distant past. But in the effort to forget them, honour must never be neglected to those thousands of coloured Catholics who so accurately traced their Master's road amid insult and injury.

Except in Louisiana and Maryland Catholics form a negligible part of the *haute bourgeoisie* of the Country Clubs and Social Registers. Most of them, Irish apart, grew up to the sound of foreign languages spoken by parents or grandparents in the home. Some, in the South-West, are survivors of Spanish colonization; most descend from the great waves of immigration from Central and Southern Europe. To the newly arrived immigrant his church is especially dear. It unites him in prayer and association with the home he has left; it is a social centre where he meets his own kind; it is a refuge full of familiar things in a bewildering new world. But the second and third generations have no tender memories of Europe. They have been reared on tales of the oppression and squalor from which their parents courageously rescued them. They want to be purely American and they develop a raw and rather guilty resentment against the Old World which, I think, explains the loud Sicilian laughter I heard in the Chicago cinema. There is a temptation to identify the Church with their inferior station; to associate it with the smell of garlic and olive oil and grandfather muttering over the foreign language newspaper; to think of it as something to be discarded, as they rise in the social scale, as they discard their accents and surnames. Some, of course, do so. It is rare to find formal apostates, but occasionally parents who have ceased to care about their religion have their children brought up by Episcopalian or Baptist, in the belief that it gives them a better start in life and that, anyway, it is the child's business to choose for himself later on. But not often: it is one of the prime achievements of the American Catholic clergy that they have reconciled those first stirrings of a new loyalty with the ancestral faith, and Europeans should remember the problem that had to be solved before they look askance at the cruder expressions of nationalism which get quoted.

The Irish, on the other hand, present a precisely contrasting problem. They have never suffered a prick of shame in avowing their origins. Indeed, the further they move in time and place from their homeland the louder they sing about it. Should they

ever return they would be shocked by the cynicism of their Dublin cousins. The problem with the Irish is to guard them from the huge presumption of treating the Universal Church as a friendly association of their own, and that problem has not been solved. In New York on St. Patrick's day, among the green carnations first invented by the Irishman, Oscar Wilde, for quite another significance; in Boston on any day of the year; the stranger might well suppose that Catholicism was a tribal cult. Only when he comes to study American hagiology does he learn that other races have their share in Pentecost. To the European it seems that the Irish have been led to betray their manifest historical destiny. When Englishmen in the last century founded a review which was to be for Catholics what the *Edinburgh Review* was for rationalists, they called it the *Dublin Review*. When there was a project for a national Catholic University, Newman went to Ireland. Had Ireland remained in the United Kingdom, Dublin would to-day be one of the great religious capitals of the world where Catholics from all over the British Empire resorted for education and leadership. That splendid hope was defeated by the politicians. What Europe lost, America has gained. The historic destiny of the Irish is being fulfilled on the other side of the Atlantic, where they have settled in their millions, bringing with them all their ancient grudges and the melancholy of the bogs, but, also, their hard, ancient wisdom. They alone of the newcomers are never for a moment taken in by the multifarious frauds of modernity. They have been changed from peasants and soldiers into townsmen. They have learned some of the superficial habits of "good citizenship," but at heart they remain the same adroit and joyless race that broke the hearts of all who ever tried to help them.

It is one of the functions of an upper class to remind the clergy of the true balance between their spiritual and their temporal positions. In most Catholic communities in the United States, so far as there is an upper class at all, the clergy themselves comprise it. From one year to another they never meet anyone better informed or more elegant than themselves. The deference with which they are treated on purely social occasions would tend to spoil all but the most heroic humility.

The presbyteries of Mr. Harry Sylvester's *Moon Gaffney* and Mr. J. F. Powers' *Prince of Darkness* are not mere literary inven-

tions. Reading those admirable stories one can understand why there is often a distinct whiff of anti-clericalism where Irish priests are in power. They are faithful and chaste and, in youth at any rate, industrious, but many live out their lives in a painful state of transition; they have lost their ancestral simplicity without yet acquiring a modest carriage of their superior learning or, more important, delicacy in their human relations, or imagination, or agility of mind. To them, however, and to the Germans, must go the main credit for the construction of the Church in America. Without them the more sensitive Latins and Slavs would have at first huddled together in obscure congregations, then dispersed and perhaps have been lost to the Faith. The Irish with their truculence and practical good sense have built and paid for the churches, opening new parishes as fast as the population grew; they have staffed the active religious orders and have created a national system of Catholic education.

This last achievement is, indeed, something entirely unique. Without help from the State—indeed in direct competition with it—the poor of the nation have covered their land with schools, colleges and universities, boldly asserting the principle that nothing less than an entire Christian education is necessary to produce Christians. For the Faith is not a mere matter of learning a few prayers and pious stories in the home. It is complete culture infusing all human knowledge. It is no doubt true that some branches of specialized scholarship can best be learned in the vastly richer, secular institutions. The Catholic colleges do not set themselves the aims of Harvard or Oxford or the Sorbonne. Their object is to transform a proletariat into a bourgeoisie; to produce a faithful laity, qualified to take its part in the general life of the nation; and in this way they are manifestly successful. Their students are not, in the main, drawn from scholarly homes. Many of them handle the English language uneasily. The teaching faculties are still dependent on European recruits for many of the refinements of learning. But, when all this is said, the Englishman, who can boast no single institution of higher Catholic education and is obliged to frequent universities that are Anglican in formation and agnostic in temper, can only applaud what American Catholics have done in the last hundred years. It is a very great thing that young men who are going out to be

dentists or salesmen should have a grounding of formal logic and Christian ethics. "Prove syllogistically that natural rights exist": "Give the fundamental reason why usury is wrong": "What is the difference between soul and mind?": "Give and explain a definition of Sacrifice": These are questions chosen almost at random from the examination papers of a Jesuit College. I have heard it said that American adolescents tend to "learn the answers" parrotwise without much speculation. This was not the impression I formed in talking with them, but even if it were so, they have learned something which most Europeans ignore. It is a great gain, while the memory is active, to store up formulas. Experience will give them life and later, when he is confronted with a problem, phrases from his college days will come into a man's mind with sudden vivid importance. I noticed this enormous advantage which religiously educated American adults enjoy over their more learned fellows from the secular universities. With the latter, when discussion became general, one got the impression that outside their particular subjects everything was shapeless and meaningless. Nuclear fission threatens material progress; they apprehend this and are at once in despair. What are they here for if not to participate in a benevolent scheme of evolution? It is a question which only the God-fearing can answer. The Catholic remembers the phrases of his youth, which at the time, perhaps, seemed a mere combination of words to be memorized for the satisfaction of an examiner, and suddenly the words have topical significance. He can tap at will the inexhaustible sources of theology.

This fine work of education is, at the moment, somewhat precarious. In America, as elsewhere, the independent schools are in the position of a poker-player among men much richer than himself who are continually raising the stakes. The apparatus of education is becoming exorbitantly expensive. The Catholic colleges cannot long hope to compete with the State in providing the engines of modern Physical Science. There is, moreover, a powerful group in the nation who openly aspire to uniformity as to something good in itself. I met many anxious Catholic educationalists, but I left with confidence that those who have achieved such stupendous feats in the recent past will somehow triumph over their enemies.

There is no doubt that the Catholic colleges maintain a remark-

ably high standard of duty and piety. The holy places of Notre Dame are crowded before a football match. The number and frequency of communions are startling to a European and dispose of the charge of Jansenism often loosely preferred against the Irish clergy. The habit thus inculcated often continues through life as any visitor to any church can recognize. The quantity is there. No one can judge the quality. Every soul in his traffic with God has his own secrets. A youth who is inarticulate in conversation may well be eloquent in prayer. It would be an intolerable impertinence to attempt to judge. What is plain to the observer is that throughout the nation the altar rails are everywhere crowded. It is normally from just such a deep soil of popular devotion that the fine flowers of the Faith grow. The Church does not exist in order to produce elegant preachers or imaginative writers or artists or philosophers. It exists to produce saints. God alone knows his own. Without doubt lives of deep unobtrusive sanctity are being lived in all parts of the United States, but it is true that the American Church up to the present time has produced few illustrious heroes or heroines. Archbishop Cicognani in his *Sanctity in America* lately collected thirty-five brief biographies of men and women of eminent holiness who worked in the United States. Of these, thirty-one were foreign-born and foreign-educated. Of the four natives none, it may be noted, were of Irish extraction. Two, Catherine Tekakwitha, the Indian, and Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Foundress of the Sisters of Charity, were converts. Bishop Richard Miles, the Dominican of Tennessee, was a zealous and devoted pastor and administrator. Sister Miriam Teresa Demjanovich was training to be a teacher. None were pure contemplatives.

The contemplative life is, of course, only one form of the Christian life. It is a matter of observation, however, that the health of religion in any place and age may be fairly judged by the number of contemplative vocations. Until recent years America has a poor record in this matter, but lately there are signs of change. The case of Thomas Merton has aroused wide interest but he is merely one, unusually articulate, representative of a wide and healthy movement. New Trappist houses are being established, postulants for Carmel exceed the accommodation. Man is made for the knowledge of God and for no other purpose. Where that purpose is recognized there will always be found

many who seek Him in the cloisters, from which Grace spreads to an entire people.

The Church and the world need monks and nuns more than they need writers. These merely decorate. The Church can get along very well without them. If they appear, it is a natural growth. They are not much in evidence in America at the moment, and the well-meant attempts to produce them artificially by special courses of study seem to me unlikely to succeed. A more fruitful source of such luxuries is the variety of interests which Catholics have quite recently developed—the small magazines devoted to the liturgy, to social studies, to the translation and explanation of foreign literature and so forth; the works, for example, of John and Mary Ryan in Boston, of John Pick in Milwaukee, of *Commonweal* in New York, of the Sheil School in Chicago. There is a fermentation everywhere.

I mentioned a record conclusion: that Catholicism is part of the American spirit. I do not mean that it lacks enemies. Recently there was an attempt, which very nearly succeeded, to ban specifically Christian Christmas carols from the State schools in New York. The shops all over the country seek to substitute Santa Claus and his reindeer for the Christ-child. I witnessed, early in Lent, the arrival at a railway station of an "Easter Bunny", attended by brass band and a posse of police. Just as the early Christians adopted the pagan festivals and consecrated them, so everywhere, but particularly in the United States, pagan commerce is seeking to adopt and desecrate the feasts of the Church. And wherever the matter is one for public authority, the State is "neutral"—a euphemism for "unchristian."

I mean that "Americanism" is the complex of what all Americans consider the good life and that in this complex Christianity, and pre-eminently Catholicism, is the redeeming part. Unhappily "Americanism" has come to mean for most of the world what a few, very vociferous, far from typical, Americans wish to make it. The peoples of other continents look to America half in hope and half in alarm. They see that their own future is inextricably involved with it and their judgment is based on what they see in the cinema, what they read in the popular magazines, what they hear from the loudest advertiser. Gratitude for the enormous material benefits received is tempered with distaste for what they

believe is the spiritual poverty of the benefactor. It is only when one travels in America that one realizes that most Americans either share this distaste or are genuinely unaware of the kind of false impression which interested parties have conspired to spread.

The Christian believes that he was created to know, love and serve God in this world and to be happy with him in the next. That is the sole reason for his existence. "Good citizenship," properly understood, is a necessary by-product of this essential task, but more and more the phrase has come to mean mere amenability to the demands of the government. At present the State makes few exorbitant demands in America, but there are many Americans, resolutely opposed to the mechanisms of Communism and Fascism, who yet exalt this limited conception of "good-citizenship" as the highest virtue, and regard the creation of a homogeneous society as the first end of statesmanship. In this popular, neutral opinion Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists, theosophists and all the strange sects of the nation differ only in the rites they practise, or do not practise, in certain buildings for an hour or two a week. This is pure make-believe. They differ hugely in morals, social custom, and philosophy of life—in fact in all the things they value most highly. The neutral, secular state can only function justly by keeping itself within strict limits. It is not for a foreigner to predict how long the government of the United States will resist the prevalent temptation to encroachment. He merely notes admiringly and gratefully that hitherto the temptations have been largely resisted, and also that the constitutional separation of Church and State does not, when temptation offers, guarantee the continued welfare of any particular, minority, religious body.

The Catholic holds certain territories that he can never surrender to the temporal power. He hopes that in his time there will be no invasion, but he knows that the history of his Church is one of conflict. If his rulers force him to choose between them and his Faith, in the last resort he must choose his Faith. And because in his heart he knows this, he tends to be conspicuously loyal whenever he can be so with a clear conscience. Bossuet could write without embarrassment: "*Le Roi, Jésus-Christ et l'Eglise, Dieu en ces trois noms.*" Similarly many American prelates speak as though they believed that representative, majority

government were of divine institution, and the lay American Catholic insists more emphatically on his "Americanism" than do Protestants or atheists of, perhaps, longer American ancestry.

There is a purely American "way of life" led by every good American Christian that is point-for-point opposed to the publicized and largely fictitious "way of life" dreaded in Europe and Asia. And that, by the Grace of God, is the "way of life" that will prevail.

ENGLISH PAINTING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY¹

By
JOHN ROTHENSTEIN

II

THE heaviest emphasis has been laid by art historians upon the effect of monumental qualities in the painting of Cézanne upon his followers, the Cubists in particular. We are given to understand that upon the basis of the most austere structural elements in his painting and of his precepts they brought into existence a great "Classical" art. A return to Classicism is how the post-Cézanne movement is frequently described.

"The idea behind the modern movement in the arts is a return to the architectural or classical idea"² are the first words of Mr. R. H. Wilenski's closely reasoned introduction to contemporary art, and his whole book may be considered as an amplification of them. This may well have been their programme, but it is not easy to gather from the written accounts how far it was from being realized and how quickly it was abandoned. That certain of the early Cubist paintings had a severely structural character is obvious enough. They sacrificed in a passion of dour joy the shimmering surfaces of things in which Manet and Renoir had delighted, and which Cézanne, for all his preoccupation with structure, had striven so strenuously and sometimes, especially in his water-colours, with such breathtaking success, to represent, and they created a new order of form, stark and subtle and bearing scarcely more than a remotely allusive relation to the natural order. Of the best of these highly original and momentous works are a number by Picasso. In the light of this artist's

¹ Introductory chapter of a book in preparation, published by kind permission of Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode.

² *The Modern Movement in Art*. R. H. Wilenski, 1927, p. ix.

subsequent development and the character of the intoxicating but disintegrating influence he has wielded, the fact is significant. But what have been, in fact, the effects of this group of Cubist paintings; the creations of the apostles of solid construction, of dignified, self-sufficient form? It can hardly be denied that they have been, in the main, disintegrating; that in their shadow has grown up an art as remote as any that could be conceived from the ideal of Cézanne "to make out of Impressionism something as solid and enduring as the art of the museums." The contrast between the spate of talk and writing about the rebirth of an architectural painting and of the classical ideal, and the overwhelmingly idiosyncratic character of the painting that was actually produced corresponds to the discrepancy, in the political sphere, between the proclamations, which grew thunderous upon the conclusion of both the German Wars, of international solidarity, and the persistent growth of aggressive nationalism. But whereas, in the larger sphere, the discrepancy between the ideal and the actuality is widely recognized and lamented, in the sphere of the fine arts a discrepancy not less startling is virtually denied, and the continuing chatter about "architecture" and "classicism" would lead a student who read about works of art instead of looking at them (a practice almost universal among students) to form radically different conclusions about the character of contemporary painting from those of anybody accustomed to use his eyes. Certain ideas about form implicit in the work of Cézanne and expressed in his rare sayings have gained the widest acceptance throughout the Western world, but from the two other commanding figures of the post-Impressionist movement, Gauguin and van Gogh, also derive ideas, to a certain degree complementary, which exercise a decisive influence. Upon the art of Germany and Scandinavia the influence of these two has been even more pervasive than that of Cézanne. Between the ideas of van Gogh and of Gauguin there are sharp distinctions, but their influence has been somewhat similar in its effects. Both painters were acutely aware of the exclusion from Impressionism of poetry and of the deeper human emotions; both, too, made the discovery that the tonal technique of the Impressionists, perfectly adapted though it was to the creation of harmonies in colour and light, was too vaporous to lend itself readily to the lucid expression of the poetic and dramatic emotions of their own

passionate natures. Gradually both therefore abandoned the realism of the Impressionists and each evolved an art that was predominantly symbolic.

From the Impressionists they had learnt to dispense with the older type of formal closely integrated composition; they early dispensed with the tonal system with which the Impressionists used to give cohesion to their pictures. The highly original poetry of Gauguin and van Gogh was expressed in terms which proved as fascinating to these artists' younger contemporaries as they were audacious and novel.

In this expressionistic art the functions of form and colour were to convey, symbolically yet forcefully, the emotion of the artist. Expressionism and Cubism, and its later and highly logical development, Abstraction, have played, as already noted, complementary parts in the history of contemporary painting, the one, essentially subjective, with its emphasis upon the artist's emotion, the other, rather more objective, with its emphasis upon the created form. The one may be said to correspond to the Romantic as the other to the Classical motive in the earlier art of Europe; certainly Expressionism took most vigorous roots in Scandinavia and the Germanic countries where the Romantic tradition had been persistent, and Abstraction in France and the Latin countries where the rational values had always found a wider acceptance.

But just as the Abstract artists failed to fulfil the promise of the early Cubists to build upon the foundation of Cézanne an art of pure form, nobly defined and exact, so did the Expressionists prove unable to express anything beyond a narrow and, it would seem, a continuously narrowing, range of human emotions; with the greater part of the human drama and of the poetry of life Expressionist painters were unable or else unwilling to deal. The Norwegian Edvard Munch showed himself, in a group of early paintings, pre-eminent among the rare exceptions. There would seem, in fact, to have occurred early in the period of which I am writing a catastrophic change which has profoundly affected the fine arts. The word catastrophic has been applied to this change both by those who regard it as the rejection of values which have been long regarded as constituting the foundation of European culture, and by those for whom such values represent, at the best, a series of intrinsically undesirable but historically necessary

expedients, at the worst, conventions which served no purpose but that of confining the creative spirit in the interests of tyranny, political, religious or academic.

The more closely we read history the more aware do we become of the strength and intimacy of the relationships by which the fabric of human society is bound together; the relationship between our age and another of apparently opposite character, between two factions, which at first seem irreconcilably opposed. We see, for instance, how powerfully the forces which produced the Protestant explosion in the sixteenth century were also active within the Catholic Church; we see how difficult it would be to define with exactitude the issues which divided the North from the South in the War between the American States. We may therefore take it that the revolution in the arts which may be said to have begun with post-Impressionism in the last decade of the nineteenth century and has gathered momentum continually since, may present to the future art historian an aspect perhaps less radical than it does to us. The origins of phenomena which appear, even to learned and boldly speculative art historians, entirely novel, will reveal themselves in the course of time. ". . . Where, in the immediate ancestry of modern art," asks Mr. Herbert Read, "shall we find the forbears of Picasso, Paul Klee, Max Ernst . . .?" I suspect that the future art historian will marvel at our want of perception and at the complacency which allows us to attribute to our own art an unexampled uniqueness. It is, however, difficult for someone writing to-day not to share, to a considerable extent, the impression that the characteristic art of our time is the product of a catastrophic change. The European tradition of painting owes its cohesion largely to the persistence of two impulses; to represent, as exactly as possible, the visible world, and to evolve the perfect forms of persons and things. These impulses crystallized in what are frequently termed the Realistic and the Classical ideals. Both have asserted themselves throughout the whole history of European art; from the Renaissance to the decline of Impressionism, the development and the constant interaction of these ideals has been continuous. But towards the end of the last century both began to lose their compelling power for numbers of the most reflective and highly-gifted artists. They persisted in modified form, but those who followed them travelled, more and more, along sequestered

byways rather than along the high roads. The ultimate causes for the rejection of ideals which had been accepted for so many centuries lie deep in the history of religion, of philosophy, of politics and of several fields of scientific discovery, but certain of the immediate causes are apparent. Their achievement in representing brilliant light gave to the painting of the Impressionists the character of extremity and climax. It seemed that in this, the centuries-long ambition of European artists to represent in something of its fullness the world to which their senses bore witness had been fulfilled; the old excitement in the gradual approach to reality could hardly be recovered. But the visible world exercised a diminished fascination over the artists of the post-Impressionist era not solely on account of their predecessors' close approach to the limits of the possible, but of the doubts which they shared with their fellow-men about the ultimate reality of the world perceptible to the senses. Science has conjured up a world which the senses cannot apprehend, a world in which the stars themselves—to artists and poets for thousands of years the embodiment of an eternal and changeless beauty—have no longer any tangible existence, but are instead mere illusions caused by light rays curving back to the points where once shone suns for millions of years extinct. And the very substances of which the material world is made—even the simplest and most solid among them—are now assumed not to be the stable entities they seem, but on the contrary, to be assemblies of whirling particles. But when a man of education rejects the time-honoured "common-sense" view that things are more or less what they appear to be, it is hardly any longer possible for him to believe that the profoundest truths about the world can be expressed by the representation, however searching, of its deceptive surface. The dissolution of the artist's confidence in the reality of what his eye sees is destructive of both the Realist and the Classical ideals: for it is folly equally to represent, or to idealize, a mirage.

In another age general revulsion against the close representation of the world which the eye sees might have had less "catastrophic" consequences than it has to-day. (I speak tentatively because the whole history of art records no previous revulsion against realism either so widespread or so deeply felt.) The imaginative treatment of subjects from religion, mythology or simply from the inward vision might have withdrawn painting beyond the

understanding of all but a perceptive few, while preserving a degree of continuity; but the scepticism which has weakened the confidence of modern man in the reality of the world to which his senses bear witness has yet more radically transformed his outlook; it has made him doubtful of its validity. In contemplating the art of past ages we are conscious of how much of it testified to an irrepressible delight in multitudinous aspects of the world and human society, in its Creator, in the beauty of nature and of man, in the exciting spectacle of the surrounding stream of life, so various and so dramatic as it flowed by. Even the most savage satire was animated by the sense that mankind was sufficiently precious to be castigated for its own redemption. There would seem to prevail today, among artists, little of the sense of majesty of the world and the high excitement of the human adventure. What has taken the place of the medieval artist's exalted conception of a God-centred universe in which every man and woman, and every created thing had its value and its function? Or the Renaissance artist's intoxicating confidence that man, by the intense cultivation of his understanding, his inventiveness, his daring and all his faculties might himself become godlike? Nothing, except an intense preoccupation with his separate and individual self. This individualism, historically, may be regarded as the culmination of the worship of the spirit of liberty. But now, in Western Europe and America, there are no more Bastilles to storm. For the artist there is now but one criterion: that he himself be satisfied.

The history of modern art is constantly depicted in terms of a perpetual struggle against "convention." It is true that in the arts as in other spheres of man's activity there is a continuous tendency for the disciples of an audacious innovator to reduce his practice to a system of rules more or less tightly formulated, and in so doing to obscure the true significance of his achievement. Thus they distort something which was a heightening of human perception into a complex of rules which at most alienates those perceptive and independent natures by whom the audacious innovator would have most desired to be understood. The activities of the academic mind, by transforming that which was thrilling and elusive into that which is dull and docketed, is a continual source of misunderstanding. So much is plain; but of recent years it has been habitual to exaggerate the importance of

the mischief which pedants have done to painting. Among the forces which form the natures of great artists and bring about the flowering or the decline of traditions these pedants have a minor place.

Time and again we see the man of genius in conflict with the academician, but the activities of the framer of conventions are not for that reason devoid of positive value. If his effect is frequently to provoke the man of genius by constricting him, he plays a necessary part in the education of less gifted men: he makes available to them, in a readily assimilable form, not only the accumulated technical experience of his predecessors but even something of their vision. In those rare ages when many masters are at work they themselves can diffuse directly their fertilizing influence, but in those far commoner ages when there are few or none, the function of the academician in preserving, systematizing and handing on—even though it be in a desiccated form—the heritage of the past is a useful one. Even though his gaze is directed towards the past and his bias towards the formula and away from the spirit, what, without the academician, would be the plight of the secondary artist, whose nature does not demand that he should have that immediate contact, intuitive or intellectual, with first causes which is one of the distinguishing necessities of genius? A distinctive, closely-knit tradition is the most favourable seed-bed of the secondary artist, just as a profusion of these would seem to create the most favourable conditions for the emergence of genius. Thus the academician, invaluable to the secondary artist, makes his contribution, however pedestrian, however indirect, to the formation of the master also.

According to the contemporary history of art, "convention" is the great positive evil against which all good artists have had to contend—a kind of artistic fascism—and new movements are explained by the necessity for "breaking away from" or "reacting against" such and such a "convention." As though the prime motive of those dedicated to one of the most exalted and most exacting of man's vocations was a bicker with obsolescent regulations! The fundamental causes for the new directions which the arts are forever taking under the hands of the masters are outside the scope of this book (although I have touched upon what I think is the most important of these, namely, the masters'

preternatural sensibility to the respects in which the art of their times fails to express the whole man), but if there is one factor which plays no part in the formation of contemporary art it is the "convention." For "convention," comparable to the older, clearly formulated, passionately held complexes of rules, can hardly be said to exist any longer. Some contemporary painters and a larger number of their advocates continue to behave as though there were still reactionary and, above all, realistic formulas against which they were under an obligation to struggle. But what restrictions are there upon the absolute liberty of the artist to please himself? The "Old Bolsheviks" of the Cubist Revolution and their younger followers decline to recognize that they are tilting at a mirage, and aggressively asserting rights which for years nobody has dreamed of challenging. They do not tell us against what they are remaining in this state of perpetual belligerence. The truth is that the revolutionary impulse has largely expended itself, and for the very reason that there are no longer any objects for revolutions; all doors are open. What remains to be seen is whether art can, in fact, flourish without laws. "Art," declared Ozenfant, "is structure, and every construction has its laws." The question is whether the abolition of every law but the satisfaction of the artist is not vitiating those deeper impulses necessary to the creation of great works of art. Modern painters have easy access to the knowledge of all traditions but the powerful support of none. I say "powerful support" because many, indeed perhaps all traditions, in attenuated forms, still persist. The present situation is in this regard admirably described by Mr. Herbert Read ". . . we have in some way telescoped our past development and the human spirit, which in the past has expressed itself, or some predominant aspect of itself, diversely at different times, now expresses the same diversity, without any stress on any particular aspect, at one and the same time. I might refer, as a modest illustration of my meaning, to those metal cups made of a series of what mathematicians presumably call conic segments which when pressed together, collapse into concentric rings—what was once continuous and spread over several sections of space becomes discontinuous within one section of space."¹ Read rightly disclaims the implication that the human spirit is more diverse today than at any other time, but it is true that the

¹ *Art Now*, revised edn., 1936, p. 60.

very absence of authoritative traditions and of imposed discipline of any kind allows for a more untrammelled expression by the artist of his own personality than at any previous time. Prior to the nineteenth century most art served a religious or a social purpose which demanded some subordination of the artist's personality; whereas for the artist of to-day the expression of himself has become his sole, or at all events his overriding preoccupation. And this preoccupation was shared no less by the Cubists and other Abstract artists, whose work at first glance has an objective look, than by the Expressionists, whose work is frankly personal. "Cubism differs from the old schools of painting," declared Guillaume Apollinaire, "in that it aims not at an art of imitation, but at an art of conception, which tends to rise to the height of creation." But in what sense can the concepts and the creations of Cubists be said to be less exclusively the products of the artist's mind than the "literary" concepts of Expressionists? Both are manifestations of the forthright and uninhibited expression of personality which is the distinguishing characteristic of the art of our time. In the past artists have been inspired by exalted subjects, most of all by religious subjects, and their talents tempered and directed by tradition, but the artists of our own day rely upon neither of these external sources of strength: they are at once their own subjects and their own teachers. Their art therefore in comparison with that of certain periods of the past conspicuously lacks the sustained dynamic power which can result from the combination of a great subject and a comprehensive discipline; it resembles a river which has overflowed its banks. Paradoxically the perfect liberty of which so many artists have dreamed, now achieved, makes it the more difficult to realize the great work of art. But if in our own time the great work of art, rare in the most propitious circumstances, is exceptionally rare, that does not mean that our own highly personal and in consequence, infinitely various art has not qualities which are unique and precious. We have become so accustomed to regard art as primarily the expression of personality and as being practised for the satisfaction of the artist himself, that we are apt to forget how recently in the history of the world such an art came into existence. Almost all medieval art exhibits an anonymous and collective character; only with the early Renaissance did the artist begin to emerge as a highly differen-

tiated individual, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the conception of personal and self-sufficient art lately so widely accepted began to prevail. And we have no assurance that it is certain, or even likely to continue to prevail even in Western Europe and the Americas. Within the last thirty years it ceased to be accepted by the rulers of three great States, Russia, Germany and Italy, and in their dependencies. In all these the arts were transformed overnight into instruments of political propaganda and education and could no longer be the unforced expression of the individual human spirit, and their criterion became, therefore, social utility instead of intrinsic worth. And the time may come sooner than we expect when the kind of art which, to one living in Western Europe or the Americas, is now taken for granted, may have come to an end. There have been in the past many tyrannies and many states where the rulers have employed artists for purposes which allowed only the narrowest scope for the expression of personal idiosyncrasy, yet art as an expression of human personality has always survived and generally flourished. Those who argue from the example of the past that this kind of art can still be pursued in the totalitarian state of the twentieth century fail to distinguish the radical difference between these and the older authoritarian states in which even subversive art was sometimes tolerated, and the consequences of this difference for the artist. This difference arises from the fact that modern totalitarian states have come into existence at a time when democracy has already established itself over large areas of the world and become—in spite of the effeteness of many democratically elected governments—an active and formidable principle. The governments of such states, which by their very nature cannot allow their authority to be challenged, even implicitly, are therefore compelled to control with unexampled vigilance and severity the popular opinion which they have displaced as the most powerful element in politics. There is no manifestation of opinion, however insignificant, which is hostile, or even indifferent, to these regimes which they can safely tolerate. Art, with its unique power over the mind, must be subject to the most rigorous control, or rather, to the most precise direction. To the modern absolutism personal art is at the best an irrelevant display of personal egotism, at the worst the germ of an alternative attitude towards life, and as such a subversive activity.

Let us therefore remember in considering the art of our own day that it is the most extreme expression of the form of the Humanist tradition which sets supreme value upon personality. Let us remember, too, that it may prove to be its ultimate expression. Of recent years in particular there has been a tendency—an anticipation, perhaps, of what would seem to be the collectivist epochs ahead of us—to deplore Humanism's rejection of the anonymity that marked, during the Middle Ages, so many of man's activities. We may live to see the subordination of the individual to a totalitarian state and his merging in the anonymous mass, and to learn thereby consciously to value manifestations of personality.

At the beginning of this essay I voiced my doubt whether the present would ever be counted among the great ages of painting, but its ultimate and extreme expression of Humanism, its astonishing variety, and the unprecedented conditions with which its artists have had to come to terms give it, nevertheless, an extraordinary character. In this general interest in the art of our time many share, but very few would seem to attach serious importance to the contribution of our own country. As I write I have before me a number of notices on the Tate Gallery exhibition of the last fifty years of British Painting which was shown at Millbank in 1946 after a tour of the principal capital cities of Europe. The Press, I think without exception, praised the representative character of the selection; but certain of the most responsible papers referred in cool or else frankly disparaging terms to the school of painting it represents. "What are its characteristics?" asks *The New Statesman and Nation*¹ and thus answers the question. "Rarely original, even more rarely powerful, it is usually sensitive especially in colour." The impression received by *The Spectator*² is one of "respectable talent, a general level of sensibility without authority. . . . For eyes other than British it is not an impressive period, for we spent most of it in the backwaters of streams already grown stagnant at their source." Such quotations would seem to be typical not of ignorant but of informed and responsive elements of British public opinion. While nobody would be likely to maintain that during the period with which this book is concerned English painting could compare with French in richness, in perfection or in inventiveness it must be remembered

¹ 10 May, 1947.

² 16 May, 1947.

that the latter was at the close of one of the inspired epochs not in our history alone but in the history of European art. At the beginning of the present century the great Impressionists were alive: with the death of Bonnard in 1946 the last of their disciples departed. And who remains active in France to-day? In my view two figures tower above the crowd, Rouault, the sombre suffering-haunted groping giant, and Picasso (who is not a Frenchman), the prodigiously accomplished and prolific master of all styles and all media; the one a blundering but God-guided sleep-walker, the other very much "all there," the resourceful master of every situation. To Matisse, gifted though he is with a singing sense of colour, as a designer and as a pure yet engagingly informal draughtsman, and with the nature which so limpidly reflects the temperate gaiety of the French character, I doubt whether posterity will accord so pre-eminent a place as he occupies to-day. There is a flimsiness in the central principle which informs the art of Matisse which will, I think, grow more apparent in the coming years. These three apart there seem to me to be no painters with serious claim to the title of master. Braque is a grave and beautiful artist whose work projects with a rare and serene distinction a pre-existing vision, but he lacks, quite simply, the magnitude of a master, the magnitude which is not, of course, dependent upon the scale on which an artist works, and which is, for example, as manifest in a drawing by Rubens or an etching by Goya as in their largest paintings.

Is this commonplace of criticism—hardly less widely accepted here than abroad—that an immeasurable gulf separates the painting of England from that of France in fact justified? Or is it an inevitable consequence of the dazzling ascendancy of France right up to the immediate past? And of the debt which every English artist of our age—with a single exception to be noticed later—owes to French inspiration in his formative years?

THE POPULATION PROBLEM

By

JOHN RUSSELL

THE latter part of the eighteenth century was a time of enthusiasm and hope for idealists. The French Revolution was ushering in a new era of liberty and fraternity, when tyranny and oppression should be no more; new technological discoveries and inventions had been showing the way towards unlimited improvements in the material comfort and prosperity of mankind; medical advances, such as vaccination for smallpox, gave hope for the conquest of disease and suffering; Condorcet, Godwin, and other writers were painting beautiful pictures of a classless society in which greed and exploitation were abolished and in which, as a result of science and a new political system, every man should have sufficient for his needs with a very moderate expenditure of labour.

The later excesses of the French Revolution were somewhat disconcerting to these idealists, but they might be mere transitory growing pains. In 1798, however, a more serious shadow fell across the dawning Brave New World. An Anglican clergyman, Thomas Malthus by name, published a small book entitled *An Essay on the Principle of Population* which seemed to make nonsense of all Utopias. In it he argued that population is always tending to increase more rapidly than food supplies. There is therefore in any community a constant tendency to over-population. When this tendency becomes pronounced a severe food shortage will result, which will inevitably lead to an increase in disease, war and famine. The death rate will accordingly rise, and the population will decrease until it is once again small enough to be adequately fed. A brief period of prosperity will ensue, during which the population will again increase too rapidly until hunger and disease shall again have taken their toll. All history is a perpetual series of oscillations between prosperity and misery. Utopias are an illusion;

hunger, suffering and disease are of the very essence of human society.

This hard conclusion was somewhat softened by the author in subsequent editions of the book. Disease and famine are the positive checks to population, which will operate inexorably if the rate of increase is not controlled. But there is another and less cruel check—the preventive check. This consists in the voluntary control of reproduction by means of late marriage. If a man realizes that in his present circumstances he could not support a large family, and if he is prudent, he will postpone any idea of marriage until such time as it is too late for him to have any children, or more than a very few:

If this restraint does not produce vice, it is undoubtedly the least evil that can arise from the principle of population. Considered as a restraint on a strong natural inclination, it must be allowed to produce a certain degree of temporary unhappiness; but evidently slight, compared with the evils which result from any of the other checks to population; and merely of the same nature as many other sacrifices of temporary to permanent gratification, which it is the business of a moral agent continually to make.¹

Artificial methods of birth prevention were not unknown in Malthus's day, but he himself never advocated them, and there is no doubt he would have rejected them with disgust.

Malthus believed that Britain in 1800 was already overpopulated. Every transient industrial depression was a sign that the birth rate was too high and ought to be reduced. The England of his day was "nearly full." A limited increase in food supplies might be possible, but it would be a slow and laborious business.

Malthus was by all accounts a kind-hearted man and a good father, but so strongly was he impressed by the danger of overpopulation that he did not hesitate to urge the abolition of the Poor Laws, in order that the poorest classes might be more effectively deterred from marrying by the knowledge that if they did, their children would be left by the community to starve.

As it happened, neither the politicians nor the poor paid much attention to Malthus. The poor continued to have as large families as before; the politicians continued, rather sporadically, to improve their conditions. The results of this unwise proceeding were surprising, and would doubtless have disconcerted Malthus

¹ 8th edition, p. 7.

if he had lived to see them. The population of England and Wales, which was nine millions in 1801, rose to thirty-two and a half millions in 1901, but during the whole of this time, apart from temporary fluctuations, the death rate continued to fall and the standard of living to rise.

Nevertheless, if Malthus's forebodings were ignored by those whom they chiefly concerned, they profoundly troubled many honest people who were concerned with the future welfare of the race. The nightmare vision of more and more babies pouring into the world, and no food for them, was one which they could never set aside. Disaster was always lurking round the next corner, or perhaps the next but one. Sooner or later it must overtake a doomed humanity. It is understandable that many such people should have come to regard contraception as the only possible escape from the threatening danger. A detailed examination of this solution would lie outside the scope of the present article. It must suffice to say that in the past it has always been unhesitatingly rejected as immoral by nearly all civilized peoples, and is still so rejected by a large part of the human race—Catholics, Mohammedans, Hindus and many orthodox Jews.¹

How far has Malthus's principle of population been verified in practice? To what extent are famine and disease associated with over-population, in the past or present? Let us first be clear as to the meaning of our terms. A country is not over-populated merely because its available food supplies are inadequate. Famine and disease are in fact much more characteristic of sparsely than of densely populated countries. There was much more of both in fourteenth-century England with less than four million inhabitants than in twentieth-century England with forty million. The death rate from starvation was undoubtedly higher in the U.S.A. when it was inhabited by Red Indians with a population density of one man to many square miles, than it is to-day with a density of forty-four per square mile. A sparse population cannot make proper use of its natural resources, and is for that very reason more vulnerable to disaster.

¹ According to the recent report of the Population Commission (pp. 77-8) there is still a widespread dislike of contraceptive appliances among married couples in this country and America, which is apparently independent of religious belief. The Commission also notes with concern that a "substantial proportion" of the population still uses no artificial methods of birth-prevention of any kind (p. 50).

Similarly, a country cannot be called over-populated, even though food supplies are chronically short, so long as the shortage is capable of being remedied, whether by increased food production at home, or by increased foreign trade, or by emigration, etc. This conclusion is not altered by the fact that a particular community may be too lazy or unenterprising, or too much tied down by a defective social system to take the necessary steps. A country is only over-populated if it has really reached the limit of its resources, or at least cannot increase them without great hardship, or without producing very undesirable consequences in some other direction. Furthermore, even if a particular region is genuinely overcrowded, the problem is still only an artificial one if there are available, elsewhere, undeveloped areas to which the surplus population would be willing to go, and in which they could be usefully accommodated unless unreasonably prevented by some other nation.

With these considerations in view, we may now ask whether the world as a whole is over-populated at present, or is likely to be in the near future. Interest in this question has been stimulated by the temporary food shortages caused by the War; many people have been asking whether we have at last reached the point, prophesied so confidently by so many Malthusians, where population has outrun the capacity of the earth's surface to produce more food. A rather sensational book has been published by an American writer, W. Vogt,¹ who asserts that not only can no further substantial increases be expected, but that food production will inevitably decline in the near future owing to worldwide soil deterioration. He suggests that American aid to other countries should be made conditional on these countries instituting intensive birth-control campaigns, aimed at a drastic reduction of their populations.

On the other hand, agricultural experts who have studied the question believe that large increases in food production can be achieved, if the proper steps are taken. This is, for instance, the conclusion of Sir John Russell, who has recently surveyed the whole problem in his Presidential Address to the British Association. Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Organization—an international body set up in connection with UNESCO to study world food problems—is much more hopeful. Sir Herbert

¹ *Road to Survival* (Gollancz).

Broadley, its deputy Director-General, has said that FAO "emphatically dissociates itself from the grim forebodings of such neo-malthusians as Aldous Huxley, William Vogt and Fairfield Osborn," and believes that enough food could be produced to feed the present world population and also many millions more.¹ Sir John Boyd-Orr, although he takes a less hopeful long-term view, estimates that world food supplies could be doubled in less than twenty-five years. Professor C. B. Fawcett² considers that with our present powers of production the world might be made to support three times its present population in reasonable comfort. These estimates are not mere day-dreams; they are based on existing knowledge and on advances in technique which may reasonably be anticipated as a result of research already in progress. The more remote possibilities of increased production cannot be assessed, but they may be very great.

Malthus, it may be admitted, had some excuse for his fears. He was faced with an absolutely unprecedented increase in population, and he could hardly have foreseen the advances in technology which have more than kept pace with this increase. But there is less justification for the alarm of his present-day disciples. They have seen the population of Great Britain increase during the past two hundred years from some six and a half million to fifty million; they have seen the fifty million enjoying a much higher standard of living than the six and a half million and they know that the resources of science are very far from being exhausted. Yet still their anxiety remains. Famine is still just round the corner. A series of happy chances has postponed it from year to year during the past two centuries, but the end must be drawing near. It may not be in our time, but our children, or their children, or their children's children will wake up one day to find themselves in an over-populated world. In order to avoid this dreadful situation it is absolutely necessary that the world should at once set about drastically reducing its birth rate.

This is surely an irrational anxiety. We might reasonably be anxious if the world's food resources had already been developed to their limit. But in fact the anxiety is concerned with a purely hypothetical situation which might arise at some unknown time in the future. It is reasonably certain that the world could support

¹ *The Times*, June 18, 1949.

² *The Advancement of Science*, Vol. 4, (1947) p. 140.

at least double its present population in comfort, and probably much more. It will be time enough to consider what steps should be taken to avoid genuine over-population when this is seen to be actually approaching. In any case, our descendants will presumably be much more competent to deal with the problem, if and when it arises, than we are, since they will have a knowledge of the relevant facts which is necessarily hidden from us. At the moment there is no practical problem of over-population; there is only the practical problem how best to develop the world's available resources.

However, if this is true of the world as a whole, it is not necessarily true of every individual country. It is doubtful whether any country to-day is absolutely over-populated in the sense that its food and industrial resources could not be developed sufficiently to support its present population in reasonable comfort. But some countries, such as India, seem to be not very far from saturation point with present rates of increase. This raises a difficult further problem: if a country is really over-populated has its people got a moral right to expand into the vast undeveloped regions of the world which are owned by other peoples who are unable or unwilling to develop them properly themselves? If they are refused, have the over-crowded people a right to enter by force? It would be generally agreed that if there is an acute housing shortage in a particular country, and if one individual owns an enormous house in which most of the rooms are permanently empty, then he ought to make some of his surplus accommodation available for his less fortunate neighbours. Is the same thing true as between nations? What obligations, if any, exist between nations in such matters? I must love my neighbour, but must I let him settle in my wilderness? And who is my neighbour anyway?

Another group of problems which we can only indicate briefly, concerns what may be called the optimum population. A steadily increasing population will begin to experience inconveniences and difficulties some time before it has reached the absolute maximum which can be supported. How far are we prepared to go? How much trouble are we willing to take, in order to make it possible for more children to be born into the world? Our answer to this question will depend very much on our whole philosophy of life.

Which is better: a relatively sparse population with a high standard of living, easy working conditions and a low death rate; a denser one which can support itself by hard work in frugal comfort; or a still denser one in which even this condition cannot necessarily be guaranteed? The modern materialist takes it as axiomatic that the optimum population will be that which can enjoy the highest standard of material comfort and the most leisure. Similarly, many married people, it would seem, will only have children if they can do so without reducing their standard of living. The motive for this may be mere selfishness, but it is also based sometimes on considerations of the welfare of the children themselves and of posterity, and in such cases the attitude deserves further examination. Let us look at the question successively from the point of view of the parents, the child, and society as a whole. The problem is exceedingly complex, and we shall do no more than suggest a few lines of thought.

First, how will the parents approach the subject? "If we have another child, we cannot afford to send it to a good Public School. It would be handicapped by an inferior education and might well sink into a lower social class than our own. Would it be fair to the child to launch it into the world under such disabilities?" "If we have another child we may not be able to give it even the ordinary comforts of life. It may suffer hunger in bad seasons, and disease; it may even die before it reaches manhood. Is it right—is it not a positive injury to the child itself—to bring it into the world under such conditions?"

Next, what has the child to say? "If you bring me into the world you will not be able to give me a first-class education, and perhaps I shall not be able to move in the best social circles. Would I or would I not prefer to have remained in the nothingness from which you called me, rather than go to an inferior school? Is not-to-go-to-a-good-Public-School a better or worse fate than not-to-be-born-at-all?"

"If I am born I shall sometimes go hungry; I may die of disease while I am still young. Would life have any positive value for me under such conditions? Is it better not to be born at all than to go hungry or to die before the age of twenty? Is life such a dubious blessing that it is only worth living if it is lived under the very best material conditions—no hunger, no disease, plenty of leisure? To what extent will my happiness depend on my standard of

living; to what extent on other considerations—the love of my family, the love of my fellow men, my religion?”

Leaving our infant and the reader, to answer these questions for themselves, let us finally look at the problem from the point of view of society as a whole. Society as such cannot speak, but we will listen to a social planner in a self-questioning mood: “I am planning a world in which disease and hunger shall be no more; in which everyone shall have the maximum leisure and the highest possible standard of living. I believe that to this end it is absolutely necessary to control populations throughout the world. In England I am well on my way to succeed. But am I really making people happier? How many parents to-day will seriously question whether it is fair to a child to bring him into the world unless they can ensure for him a really high standard of living and a safe and easy life? Is the value which we attach to existence to-day so doubtfully balanced between plus and minus that we seriously believe it to be worse than non-existence unless it can just be redeemed by being lived under the very best possible material conditions? Is it possible that the swarming, diseased, undernourished children of an Eastern bazaar find more value in life—are more convinced that it is worth living—than the well-fed, hygienic, contraceptively planned children of twentieth-century England who, when they grow up, may find themselves doubting whether they ought to bring more children into a world which has given them so little real satisfaction? The Eastern child, when he grows up, will cheerfully accept a reduced standard of living in order to have a family, and neither he nor his children will think that he has injured them by bringing them into the world.

“Am I then to conclude that all my efforts to control famine and disease are futile, and that the world would be a happier place if we simply left people to breed and starve and die, in the vague hope that they might thereby recover their lost sense of the value of existence? Surely not. I know that famine and disease are evil things. I know that I am right to combat them. To turn away and leave the world to suffer and starve would be a betrayal of the most sacred principles of humanity.

“Am I equally sure, however, that my efforts have always been well-directed? I have always concentrated on the material and measurable aspects of human well-being—the reduction of disease and death rates, increasing the standard of living, and so on. I

have preached contraception because I believed it would increase these material benefits. Am I satisfied with the results, in the family life of England to-day? Have my methods been wrong, even if my intentions were good? Have I perhaps overlooked the existence of certain factors which make for happiness in life, but which do not appear in the Registrar-General's statistical returns or the cost-of-living Index? Is the purpose of man's life on earth merely to have the most comfortable possible time, or is he here for some other purpose? If so, have my well-meant efforts to control population been hindering the achievement of this purpose? And is this one of the reasons why man to-day is not so happy as I had dreamed that he was going to be?"

THE FIRST THING AND THE LAST

By

JEAN DANIELOU

A MARKED characteristic of contemporary theology, Catholic and Protestant, is the emphasis laid on eschatology. We are here in fact faced with a revolution so radical that it affects our very approach to Christian revelation. Traditionally eschatology formed part of the treatise on the Last Things, which is principally concerned with the lot of the soul after death—immortality, heaven and hell and, at least for Catholics, the particular judgment and purgatory. Today, however, eschatology means something quite different and has for its subject-matter the concluding events of the universe as a whole. These events began with the coming of Christ, who is in St. Paul's thought *eschatos anthropos*, the "culminating man."¹ They will find their consummation in his Second Coming (*parousia*) with the creation of

¹ Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 45 and Apoc. i. 17; ii. 8.

new heavens and a new earth.¹ And they comprise the whole stretch of time between these two terms, that is to say, the entire era of the Church. Henceforth eschatology no longer occupies a narrow area of Christian thought, but is a new manner of conceiving and of presenting the Christian revelation itself.

The principal reason for this radical change has been the development in biblical theology and, in particular, in the study of the New Testament. As one turns the pages of the latter, there is little to be seen that relates to eschatology in the older and narrower sense. Information about the lot of the individual soul after death is very scarce and is contained mainly in the parable of Dives and Lazarus² with its indication that the wicked shall be in Hades and the good in "the bosom of Abraham." At times resurrection is reserved for the end of the world, but St. Paul appears to say that the just shall put on "a spiritual body" after death.³ As to the particular judgment and purgatory, there are only indications and no statement that may be called decisive. The eschatology of the New Testament is preoccupied with two other ideas—judgment and resurrection in so far as these are already accomplished in Christ and in the Church, and the cosmic events which accompany and constitute the end of the world. And so a more attentive study of the New Testament has inevitably led to less emphasis being placed on the end awaiting the individual soul, in order that due value may be given to eschatology considered as a global vision of the world.

But if it is true that all biblical theologians are agreed on the importance of New Testament eschatology, it is also well known how widely they differ in its interpretation. The partisans, with Albert Schweitzer, of *consequent* eschatology affirm that Our Lord was expecting the end of the world as a future event due to take place in His own lifetime, and that He was deceived in this belief. Their merit has been that of drawing attention to the eschatological character of Christ's message, but their interpretation of it is unacceptable and does not do justice to the actual texts. In the opposite camp those who, with C. H. Dodd, maintain *realised* eschatology, consider that Our Lord presented the messianic kingdom as already at hand in his own person—no longer a future event but a present reality. This view certainly corresponds to a

¹ 2 Peter iii. 13, quoting Isaiah lxv. 17.

² Luke xvi. 23-27.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 5.

great part of Christ's revelation, and one that at once contains the core of that revelation and gives it its characteristic novelty; but it fails to take full account of the texts which present the kingdom as still to come.

In his recent study of New Testament eschatology, Mr. H. A. Guy¹ presents a more complete solution, which does justice to all the relevant texts. In a book of very moderate size the author assembles these texts and gives a fully satisfying explanation of them, an explanation which shows both the unity of the doctrine as a whole and the varying forms it takes in different scriptural layers. His basic thesis is that Christ at the same time proclaimed that the eschatological kingdom was at hand in his own person, and that its full consummation was yet to come. In this way the strictly historical factor, that progressive structure which was eliminated alike by Schweitzer and by Dodd, is reintroduced as a constitutive element of eschatology, which thus becomes the unfolding of all the events which make up the final stage of the world's history. These conclusions fit in with those of Werner Kümmel² and Oscar Cullmann³ and can now be considered as established once and for all.

But even so, there remain many subsidiary questions, of which the first is that of the imminence of the consummation of the world. Kümmel considers that Christ expected some interval of time to elapse between the Resurrection and the Second Coming, but only a very short one. Mr. Guy, however, shows that St. Paul's originality lay in proving that the Church in her own way brings the messianic kingdom to fulfilment, and he quotes to this effect the remark of Professor Dodd: "The whole territory of the Church's life is the field of the eschatological miracle" (p. 127). Inaugurated by Our Lord in his own person, the eschatological kingdom is continuously unfolded in the Church until the time of its consummation with the Second Coming. The age of the Church represents one stage of eschatology. But this can have no meaning unless the consummation be long delayed. Hence the texts proclaiming the imminence of Judgment must be interpreted not only of the final event, but also of the whole train of

¹ *The New Testament Doctrine of the Last Things*. By H. A. Guy. (Oxford University Press, 10s. 6d.)

² *Verheissung und Erfüllung*, Bâle, 1945.

³ *Le Christ et le temps*, Neufchâtel, 1947.

eschatological events that lie ahead.¹ Thus, while St. Luke's Gospel represents Judgment as coming to pass with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, this is in fact only one among the *démarches* of Judgment seen as a whole.²

A second problem is to discern which elements in New Testament eschatology derive from Jewish apocalyptic literature, and which concrete representations must in consequence be regarded as of merely transitory value. Rudolf Bultmann has pressed this point of view the furthest. For him the whole aspect of historical development in eschatology belongs to the mere literary form of representation. The eschatology of the New Testament needs to be "de-mythologised" and can be reduced to the simple consciousness of a present break in history.³ In a remarkable article Kümmel has shown how the logical outcome of this view would be to exclude entirely the historical character of Christ's message, under pretext of criticising the forms of presentation which it adopts, and that Bultmann's theories thus resolve into those of his chief adversaries, the liberal Protestants deriving their inspiration from Harnack, for whom the Gospel is just a moral exhortation and not an eschatological proclamation (*kerugma*).⁴

It remains true, however, that part of the eschatology of the New Testament is expressed in the language and under the imagery of apocalypse. Take, for example, the clouds on which the Son of Man is seated at his coming, the trumpets that herald his approach, Hades considered as a subterranean region, the devils regarded as inhabiting the upper air. . . . These factors belong to a literary context which does not affect the basic ideas, however difficult it may sometimes be to say where the imaginative covering ends and the dogmatic core begins. On this Kümmel has some instructive pages in the article already quoted (pp. 126

¹ See Cullmann, *Le retour du Christ*, Neuchâtel, 1945.

² This accords with the view of M. André Feuillet, who proves that there is no room for a distinction within Luke xvii. 28-xviii. 8 between two successive perspectives, and that the imminent event of the fall of Jerusalem is presented as a part of the total judgment to come (*Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 1948, pp. 544 *et seq.*).

³ *Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen*, 1941, pp. 27 *et seq.* It is a pity that Guy makes no allusion to the ideas of Bultmann. It must be regarded as a flaw in his book that he takes account only of the English literature on the subject.

⁴ "Mythische Reden und Heilsgeschehen," *Collectanea Neotestamentica*, XI, Lund, 1949, p. 115.

et sqq.). Mr. Guy observes that a comparison of the eschatological passages of Mark and Matthew shows that the latter's narrative is more charged with apocalyptic representations, and so one may conclude that these form no part of the substance of the message, but are bound up with its expression in a particular cultural medium. The best proof of this is that imagery of this kind is most abundant in the texts which are the product of the Palestinian milieu, such as the Gospel of St. Matthew, the First Epistle of St. Peter and the Epistle of St. James.

Thus, after discussions lasting more than half a century, in which emphasis has been laid successively on the different aspects of eschatology, Mr. Guy has been able to offer us a neat synthesis in which all these elements find their proper place. One may perhaps wish to correct a detail here and there in the picture he gives us of New Testament eschatology; but there can no longer be question of altering its general composition. A greater tribute could hardly be paid to this little book. And as eschatology has become again for us, as it was for the writers of the New Testament, the perspective in which the Christian message is seen and understood, it is easy to judge how great will be the services rendered by a book which gives an exposition, at once objective and complete, of what there is to be found in the New Testament on this fundamental issue.

BROADCASTING

IN consideration of two events deserving immediate recognition I am going to defer the examination, promised last month, of the several services of the Corporation. On September 29th we had the first performance at Covent Garden (broadcast on the Third Programme) of *The Olympians*, a new opera by Arthur Bliss, with a libretto by J. B. Priestley. Its appearance, whether successful or not, was inevitably an important occasion; new English opera does not appear every day, and when it does it seldom boasts a libretto written by an author of such ubiquitous literary forcefulness as Mr. Priestley. The thoroughness of the playwright Priestley's treatment of the situation proved indeed an embarrassment to even as volatile and confident a composer as Mr. Bliss. It was not that the words were insufficient as dramatic writing; they just did not know when to stop. Yet

although this is essentially an uneven work in which words and music are enthusiastically associated rather than married, it achieves moments of pure enchantment almost unrivalled in modern English music. The usual specious criticisms of "unoriginality" are already being made. Mr. Bliss has a musical facility which combines with a disregard of fashion not easily forgiven by his professional contemporaries. Although he may legitimately be considered monotonous and perhaps bathetic when his inspiration flags and he falls back on a kind of hoopla acrobatic athleticism to fill in the entertainment, there is no sense in plucking at phrases and announcing "Richard Strauss" in triumphant denigration any more than in turning up one's nose at the totality of a drama because its theme or fragments of its contents may be derived. In its best moments, like the recognition by the degraded gods of their returning *numen*, Mr. Bliss shows signs of appreciating creatively that his muse is bred to express ecstasy rather than argument and action rather than contemplation.

A piece of good news has arrived. A B.B.C. entry to the *Italia* contest has won the second prize. Since the publicity machine of the Corporation, sometimes so irrepressible, has given the general public almost no information hitherto about the contest or our native entries, I should say the competition is sponsored by *Radio Italiana* "to attract the best creative talent to writing for broadcasting," the only major stipulation being that music must be an integral part of every entry. The successful English work is "Rumplestiltskin," a version of the traditional fairy tale by Francis Dillon with score by Francis Collinson.

"Rumplestiltskin" is a gay, lyrical satire wrought with an authoritative economy which makes it a model of its kind. Francis—Jack—Dillon is a specialist in satiric fantasy, though he can apply himself competently to any dramatic form of radio. At his best he is the most accomplished producer and writer of polished (not drawing-room) comedy in the B.B.C. In performance he is erratic: he can afford to be. For once or twice a year he produces a programme which critics enjoy so much that they forget to criticize, and even jaundiced professional radio actors chuckle over like children. In build he is small and spare, a false air of fragility covering an inexhaustible capacity for travel, conversation and revelry. Clothes sit on him uneasily. He exults in good fellowship of every sort, don or ploughman, aristocrat or politician. He is sometimes unfair, often provocative, never malicious; and in moments of crisis he is the first to make a generous gesture without counting the cost. The spread of his knowledge is wide; the radius of his talk and interest even wider. At the very moment, however, when you might suspect that he was only another energetic talker, he will lead you into the studio and—hey presto!—gone is the discursive, moon-jumping boon companion; in his place is a disciplined, expert

craftsman in the writing and manipulation of dramatic words and music; a ruthless, and at times almost uncanny diviner of the essential elements of a script, however cunningly they have been overlaid with handsome decoration: above all a strong "ring-master" with an irregular touch for evoking that shy and precious force, the unconscious reserves of the actor.

JOHN MCCONNELL.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

FINE as are most of the new recordings I am about to discuss they are all, for me, overshadowed by the issue of Vaughan Williams's 6th Symphony in E minor (H.M.V. C3873-3876, London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult). Here is music comparable to the great classics in its wide and profound vision and the authority and sureness of its imagination. Like the classics, too, it transcends contemporary upheavals, and I feel it is a mistake on the part of many critics (and certainly they have no authority from the composer for doing so) to relate it so closely to the late war and the possible consequences of the latter in eventual annihilation. True, it was written down in the war years, but equally true is it that it is the result of a logical evolution of decades-old characteristics in the composer's work, and it would be far better to judge it as a justification and crown of previous adventure than as a tract for the times telling of possible emptiness and annihilation. The Symphony is not entirely free from the sometimes disturbing dichotomy to be found somewhere in most of the composer's large-scale works (a dichotomy caused by the division between the impersonal folk-music tradition and the adventuring melodist and harmonist), but it is only in one place (where an E major version of one of the main themes, accompanied by harp chords, occurs towards the end of the first movement) that I feel a sudden, and alien, localization where elsewhere is an absorbing personal vision. Not enough, too, has been said by critics about the superb scoring of the work: surely nowhere in modern music is anything more magical than where, in the final movement, the harp picks out in augmentation the strange undulations of the main theme? The performance is authoritative, but I would have liked greater mechanical precision in those terrifying brass reiterations in the second movement.

Precision is perhaps too masterfully evident in other orchestral issues. Like much of Toscanini's recordings, his performance of Berlioz's "Romeo and Juliet" (H.M.V. DB 6665-6667, N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra) has a hard glittering edge that is missing in the

concert hall. It seems to be a peculiarity of American recordings, but the ear finds it difficult to extract the poetry, even though it is a poetry, as here, that has strangely little connection with Shakespeare. Hardness of approach is again evident in another American performance (Beethoven's Concerto No. 4 in G major, played by Robert Casadesus with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy: Columbia LX 1198-1201). The pianist has an unrelenting tone, and there are strange lapses in the orchestral ensemble. Decca issues Brahms's First Symphony in a performance by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra under van Beinum (AK 1895-1899). It is lovely, sensuous playing, almost unbearably so at times, yet the tremendous palpitations of the opening—surely one of the most exciting beginnings in all symphonic music—are not fully realized. The needed combination of gigantic steadiness and urgency has in my experience only been realized by Koussevitzky.

Two Dvorak works have been issued: one, the familiar Fourth Symphony in G major (H.M.V. C 3852-3856: Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Kubelik), and the other the unfamiliar Symphonic poem "The Golden Spinning Wheel," Op. 109 (H.M.V. DB 6656-6658: Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham). All of it is enchanting playing, with the addition, in the symphonic poem, of an airy fantasy and an impulsive strength that make one forget the naiveties and formal looseness of the music. What a ballet this would make! Orchestral virtuosity is shown in Ansermet's conducting of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in Ravel's "Alborada del Gracioso" (Decca K 1609), but it is a virtuosity put to fine ends. Ravel's piece is an aural delight from beginning to end, as is also another work of his on a similar somewhat exotic level, the "Tzigane" for violin and piano, played exquisitely by Ginette and Jean Neveu (H.M.V. DB 6907-8). Another outstanding violinist, Gioconda de Vito, plays the solo part in Bach's E major Concerto (London Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Anthony Bernard: H.M.V. DB 6884-6886). This is a fine authoritative record. An Italian pianist, Michelangeli, gives a stupendous performance of Brahms's Paganini Variations (H.M.V. 6909-6910), playing that is breath-taking in the ease with which it overcomes the tremendous obstacles. But it is Brahms at his least ingratiating, and even a performance such as this does not make one forget the predominantly technical—and perhaps intellectual—genesis of the music.

Of songs, there are heart-easing performances of Fauré's "Le Soir" and "Les Berceaux" by Bernac and Poulenc (H.M.V. DA 1907), and curiously unresonant ones by Frederick Fuller of some Wolf (Epiphanias, Auf dem Grünen Balkon, and Ach, des Knaben Augen: H.M.V. C 3851). Is it not a mistake, if they are to be sung in the

original German, not to use a German singer? Frederick Fuller's German is excellent, but the striving for the right inflection in, for instance, the *umlaut* in "König," suddenly, for the listener, shifts attention for an instant away from the music.

One of Beethoven's lesser known quartets, the F minor, Op. 95, is played by the Griller quartet on Decca AK 2185-2187. Here is playing of the finest quality, controlled yet full of inner impulse, and beautifully balanced in tone, never being exaggerated or understated for the sake of effect.

EDMUND RUBBRA

'THE COCKTAIL PARTY'

T. S. ELIOT in his appraisal of the dramatic method has suggested as a criterion of excellence the accessibility of the drama to several levels of appreciation. This criterion is certainly fulfilled in his latest play, *The Cocktail Party*, which had its première in August, and was performed at the Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh as part of the Edinburgh Festival.

The play has spiritual depths—the "message" is the message that Mr. Eliot has been delivering for some time now: the appearances of life can only be conquered by a course of negation and despair; the moment of dying to life is the first moment of spiritual growth, and is seen in the change from one conception of time to another—and in addition the play has the appearance of "cashing-in" on two popular forms, (1) the "salvation by psychology" type of drama, and (2) the drawing-room comedy.

The play is good theatre: the jokes got laughs at Edinburgh, and the drama of domestic upheaval held the audience; but it must be doubted whether the author's theatrical slickness aids or obscures the spiritual theme. It sometimes seemed to one at least among them that the laughter of the audience was no more than a commonsense reaction against the complexity of Mr. Eliot's thought. Such laughter falls on uneasy ears (I am speaking only of the auditor here—the text will not be published till the spring) when the context of the speech in the drift of Mr. Eliot's serious thought is remembered. Thus the Stranger's remark to Edward in Act I,

Resign yourself to be the fool you are

drew a laugh from the audience, and the actors treated it as if it was comic, but such laughter does not catch easily in the mind of one who remembers previous statements of the same theme in Eliot's work, in contexts not at all humorous. No more can the metaphysical malevolence of stairs which have one step more than was expected be as

funny as the audience at the Lyceum thought it was, and be at the same time a statement of Mr. Eliot's considered view of the world (the interpretation which his previous work would suggest). Mr. Eliot has done more than any other person to rehabilitate "wit"—the yoking-together of heterogeneous material, the sense of tragedy and the wry smile—as a poetic virtue, and there are places in this play which achieve this virtue, e.g. the toast to Lavinia's aunt at the end of the play, and the occasional Kafka-esque image (the beetle-image in Act I, Scene ii, surely derives from *The Metamorphosis*!), but it is a condition of "wit" that the disparate elements should strengthen each other, however unexpectedly, and this is a condition which is not always fulfilled in *The Cocktail Party*.

The difficulty of reconciling spiritual drama with the psychological thriller is equally great, though less obvious. The device of introducing a psychiatrist who explains the complication and assists the characters to work out their course of action does not always assist the auditor in search of the central meaning of the piece. Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly (if that is how Mr. Eliot is going to spell the name) is a *deus ex machina* in Act I and the audience is quite willing to accept him as a supernatural intervention, as a "guardian," but this willingness is shocked and disappointed in Act II when he is revealed as a distinguished psychiatrist merely engaged on his professional practice. The ambiguity between medicine and spiritual salvation has the effect of confusing the meaning of both. Mr. Eliot is not naïve enough to believe that spiritual dilemmas can find medical cure, but his sophistication produces not a higher clarity, but a loss of clarity. If Sir Henry is symbolic of the healing power of religion, why the mummery of the *chaise longue* and the concealed stenographer; again, why the pagan "libation" at the end of Act II, and the verses from *Prometheus Unbound* introducing Zoroaster?

The difficulty of approaching Sir Henry and the other "guardians," Julia Shuttlethwaite, and Alexander MacGolgie Gibbs on the two levels that Eliot seems to require is that their social and professional mannerisms are too exactly and too vividly delineated.

In *The Family Reunion* Harry's pilgrimage was plausible (even if mysterious) because we knew Harry better as a symbol of a spiritual dilemma than as a social personality, but in *The Cocktail Party* Eliot's damaging social observation is not confined to peripheral figures but is applied even to those who have the task of transmitting the play's spiritual message.

This difficulty is especially relevant to the persons who are the central figures of the play—Edward and Lavinia Chamberlayne. On the level of human drama these two are an unhappily married couple who by the intervention of a kindly psychiatrist learn to

tolerate one another. On this level they are certainly "small people," as Sir Henry calls them, and seem scarcely worth our pity; but in Act I at any rate, where the metaphysical pressure is at its greatest, we feel that they are also the prototypes of suffering humanity. In Act II, however, they are treated merely as neurotic cases and their reconciliation in Act III (which we feel should suggest the regeneration of debased humanity by spiritual insight) is too circumscribedly domestic to carry this suggestion. Their regeneration seems different, not only in extent but in kind, from that of Celia, the narrative of whose crucifixion and death is the most highly dramatic moment in the play. I am not saying that the horror of Celia's death (Alex. as *Nuntius*) is irreconcilable with the cocktail-party gaiety which surrounds it, but the effect is so great that it conceals for the moment and makes difficult the recovery of the main threads of the action—the lives of Edward and Lavinia. The death of Celia sets a standard which the rest of the play fails to live up to. Edward and Lavinia do not emerge from the neurotic into the spiritual and we feel slightly cheated that we allowed ourselves to be moved by their dilemma, to be taken in by "small people."

There is no chorus in this play, but each Act ends with a toast or "libation," in which (as in the choruses of his other plays) Mr. Eliot would seem to be inviting the audience to participate in the mystery he is celebrating. It seems to me that this is an interesting and useful innovation. The technique of parallel episodes which Eliot has used before (the four knights mirroring the four tempters in *Murder in the Cathedral*) is used here in an effective manner. The phrasing of Edward's desire to recall his wife (who has deserted him), so that he may find out who he has been all this time, is echoed by Peter (the wife's lover) when he is abandoned by Celia (Edward's mistress), so that the futility of the pattern of actions on this plane of existence is underlined. There is an effective balance between verse and prose in the play (though the vocal habits of the Edinburgh company did not always make the distinction clear).

The final question must be: has T. S. Eliot bartered his poetic birthright for a mess of plaudits? Some advance on *The Family Reunion* there certainly is—the "guardians" are more effective than the Eumenides (whose function they occupy) and there is a psychological certainty in the handling of human relationships which is new; but is not this new strength, as I have suggested, the very source of a new weakness? Mr. Eliot may regard his new play simply as an entertainment, but in that case he should not have introduced his deepest ideas. The regression to be witnessed in this play may be a temporary one, to be overcome in a new and richer synthesis, but a regression one must admit it to be.

G. K. HUNTER

REVIEWS

DANIEL O'CONNELL

Daniel O'Connell, Nine Centenary Essays, edited by Professor Michael Tierney (Browne and Nolan, 15s).

WAS Daniel O'Connell a man of many faces? Or a man of many facets? Or a man of many masks? When John Mitchel cried, "Poor old Dan! Wonderful, mighty, jovial and mean old man, with silver tongue and smile of witchery and heart of melting ruth—lying tongue, smile of treachery, heart of unfathomable fraud . . ."—and so on, he is obviously seeing O'Connell as a complex character; though, unfortunately for O'Connell, we tend to seize on the dark side rather than the bright. We think not of a man of many facets but a man of many faces—many masks, none to be wholly trusted. The nine essays in the book before me might be taken as a corrective of this ungenerous view. They do not, however, all deal with the personality of the man. The charming essay on "The Gaelic Background" by Professor Gerard Murphy, and the very valuable, informative essays by Dr. Thomas Wall and Dr. Patrick Rogers on O'Connell's continental schools, and on the actual detail and scope of Catholic Emancipation stand at a distance from the man. Some of the others deal with his ideas, and the ideas of his time, rather than with his character, but they all throw a shifting light on that protean figure who, even more than Parnell, is the summary of nineteenth-century Ireland.

One of the merits of the book is that it will, inevitably, stimulate thoughtful disagreement—note that I say "thoughtful," by which I mean to convey "fruitful" disagreement. People will always disagree about O'Connell. People will always disagree about any man as big, and as supple, and as many-sided as O'Connell, just as we like to disagree about Napoleon, Bismarck, Voltaire, Cavour or Abraham Lincoln. But it is futile to discuss any of these men without relating them to their times, the problems of their day, the practicalities of their tasks, and that is what the best essays in this book do—their shifting lights pin the central figure to his own time. "Before you begin to disagree about O'Connell," this book says, "just consider these circumstances." Nobody, for example, can in future properly discuss O'Connell's relationship with Davis, or consider the whole problem of the constitutionalist versus the revolutionary without first reading Professor Gwynn's essay in this book, on "Young Ireland." Having read it we may still disagree but now we are in a position to disagree to some purpose.

Of course, the quality of the light that is thrown on any subject

depends on the quality of the man who throws the light. Here I have a feeling that the general tint of the light in these essays is a little bit rosy. Like the pictures chosen to illustrate the book, which are all handsome and heroic. He *was* handsome, and he *was* heroic, but if handsomeness and heroism mean anything they mean liveliness and vigour and personality—and all that is missing. I would have liked at least one essay by somebody who didn't think O'Connell was a suitable subject for canonization. The nearest here to that is Professor Gwynn's essay on "Young Ireland," which recounts the O'Connell-Smith O'Brien-Davis relationship very objectively, and I think very fairly, and which is a valuable corrective to the impression most of us, I think, have had, that Davis was an angel and O'Connell an ould divil. Gwynn makes it pretty clear that Davis must have been far from easy to work with, and that the old man showed a surprising amount of patience in handling the young one. Though it is doubtful if anybody will be persuaded by Gwynn's interpretation of that dreadful scene in Conciliation Hall when O'Connell's tongue—and what a tongue he had!—reduced Davis to tears; whereat Dan, seeing his unfortunate victim gulping on the platform, strode over and put his paw on his shoulder and cried, "Davis, I love you!"

To those of us [he says], who have been brought up on the legend that O'Connell was an intolerant bigot and a hypocritical intriguer, that phrase has seemed to add insult to injury. Yet the evidence shows that O'Connell, far from being intolerant towards these restless young men, regarded them with a most genuine affection.

Well . . . In the first place it is news to me that anybody ever thought O'Connell an intolerant bigot (except his English critics who thought he was Beelzebub incarnate; I have just noticed that Newman's mother, having seen O'Connell's effigy in the waxworks, exclaims, "Vile Vulture!"); and as for his regarding these "restless young men"—the adjective is a little disdainful to say the least of it—as for his regarding these "restless young men" with a most genuine affection, I have no doubt his big heart did often warm to them. I can even believe that when he saw Davis humiliated and overcome, a gush of pity and tender feeling made him really feel for the moment that he loved the poor chap like his own son. But that doesn't mean that he had not behaved like a bully sixty seconds before—and would do the same again sixty seconds after if the same circumstances repeated themselves. The whole verity of O'Connell's nature and mind is lost if we do not see that he was so big and so various that he was like an organ with a hundred stops and any one of them was liable to jerk out at any moment, partly as it suited the occasion and partly as his feelings were genuinely moved. Does

Professor Gwynn know nobody in Ireland like that? Likewise when he quotes O'Connell's warm welcome to Smith O'Brien on his belated entry into the Repeal movement he might also quote O'Connell's privately expressed opinion of O'Brien, given years before to a Father Costello: "He is an exceedingly weak man, proud and self-conceited, and like almost all weak men, utterly impenetrable to advice." Not that there is any contradiction. A friend is better than an enemy. Ireland needed everybody. It was better to have O'Brien near his hand and influence. He may even have changed his opinion about O'Brien. Nobody wants a too-simple picture of a far from simple man. It is both more real and more interesting to have him in all his inconsistencies, all his weaknesses, all his faults, ay and if he had them, as we all have, all his vices. What is heroism but the conquering of a man's interior enemies first of all? The greatest injustice we can do to any hero is to deprive him of his weaknesses. Or, as Mauriac has said, we kill the dead a second time by making them take on sublime attitudes.

Perhaps this is why I enjoyed least in this book the essay I admired most, Dr. Roche's, called "Revolution and Counter-Revolution." I admired it so much that I read it all twice and parts of it three and four times. It is very learned, highly intelligent, and admirable above all in the way it keeps on relating O'Connell's behaviour to contemporary and historical ideas. Why then did I keep on feeling a little restless as I read it? I think it was because Dr. Roche has piled his philosophy too enthusiastically under the feet of his hero: the pedestal has become so immense that we can barely see the man on top of it, and when we do he is so remote that he looks smaller than actuality. Dr. Roche, that is, has made O'Connell rather too sublime. Indeed he has almost transformed him into a major prophet, to whom the world of to-day might look back as to one who foresaw the whole course of history from Marx to Hitler, and Hitler to 1949.

For example, when he faces up to O'Connell's famous statement that liberty is not worth a drop of human blood, he is not content to accept the obvious explanations that (a) O'Connell exaggerated; and (b) did so because the events of the French Revolution had affected his feelings profoundly, and (c) because he knew that an armed rising in his day wouldn't stand a dog's chance. Instead he writes—I am compressing considerably:

O'Connell spoke in riddles, and the true meaning of his words has taken a hundred years to make itself fully clear. The Revolution [this word is used by Dr. Roche to convey the opposite of gradual Reform] the Revolution began with a reliance on violence as a means. Unanchored in objective law it soon became confused as

to its ends. Faith in the underlying harmony of Nature wavered under the impact of the Revolutionary wars. The miseries of the industrial revolution, the *machtphilosophie* of Hegel, the new Darwinian biological conceptions, shattered the ideal. Nature emerged "red in tooth and claw," survival became the sole end, violence the principle of life. It was only one year after O'Connell's death that Karl Marx announced his gospel of organized anarchism to the world. Hence the Red Revolt that destroyed the Second Republic. [This, by the way, is a shocking over-simplification.] Hence the bomb that killed Alexander II. Hence the consistent attacks upon the very principle of rational liberty in every country to which this Nihilist blight has spread. The Revolution has devoured everything except its hate, and that hate vents itself to-day on the tormented peoples of Europe, on the millions of slave-labourers and forced migrants and the masses who flee westwards from it . . .

I do think it is going a bit far to make Dan O'Connell into an anti-Communist. And is it a fact that he cherished the personal aim, as Dr. Roche alleges, of disarming the Revolution? Or that he was either in principle or practice against revolution? He eagerly supported Bolivar, even sending him his own son to fight on his side. He welcomed the Belgian revolt of 1830 which threw out the Dutch. He said of the French revolution of 1830: "It is in all its aspects consolatory and deserving of the highest praise." It is pretty good for an alleged anti-revolutionary to approve of three revolutions inside ten years. He was actually arrested in 1824 for saying that oppression has not yet driven the Irish people to the extremity of desperate resistance, "but if such an event come to pass may the example of Greece and another Bolivar animate their efforts." For all that, I repeat that though Dr. Roche chases his ideas a bit too earnestly—a dangerous thing to do because if you chase any idea, however good, too hard, it will turn around and bite you—he has, for all that, written the most challenging essay in the book. Moreover he has done something else: he has made an effort to define what it means to be a Catholic Liberal, taking O'Connell as his example: and that was well worth the attempt. I should myself have given more emphasis to his Liberalism than to his Catholicism; not denying, of course, for one moment that he was a devout Catholic, but merely bearing in mind that he himself made several declarations such as that "the Catholics would never accept any advantages as a sect that would destroy them as a people"—bearing in mind, that is, that he was and is remembered first and foremost as a great patriot, and, considering his times and circumstances, a remarkably liberal one.

SEÁN O'FAOLÁIN

THE ANATOMY OF POETRY

The Well Wrought Urn, Studies in the Structure of Poetry, by Cleanth Brooks (Dennis Dobson, 10s 6d).

THIS interesting study by Professor Brooks consists of a number of essays dealing with particular poems by authors ranging from Shakespeare to Yeats. The essays are arranged in chronological order, and the poems considered are representative of the main "periods" of English Literature, and are mostly very well known. The studies are characterized by a common approach, the general nature of which is indicated in an introductory essay on "The Language of Paradox," and from them Professor Brooks makes certain general deductions as to the essential nature of poetry in an essay entitled "The Heresy of Paraphrase." There are two appendices in which the author pursues a little further some of the general problems he has raised, but these are outside the main scheme of the book, at least in so far as it is addressed to the ordinary intelligent reader interested in poetry. A final appendix most sensibly gives the texts of most of the poems which are discussed in detail, an example which might well be followed in books of a similar kind.

Although Professor Brooks intends that his treatments of particular texts should be considered primarily as the evidence for the general theory he enunciates, it is possible to consider them in themselves, and to ask, first of all, how far our understanding of the poems is advanced or our interest in them stimulated by his essays. From this point of view alone his book must be considered well worth while. His method of approach is indicated in the following passage from his first chapter:

The poet must work by analogies, but the metaphors do not lie in the same plane or fit neatly edge to edge. There is a continual tilting of the planes; necessary over-lappings, discrepancies, contradictions. Even the most direct and simple poet is forced into paradoxes far far more often than we think, if we are sufficiently alive to what he is doing.

His conviction as to the nature of the language of poetry—that it involves ironies, paradoxes and ambiguities—is not new, but it is here applied in the consideration of poems as widely different as Donne's *Canonization*, Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, Gray's *Elegy*, Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality Ode*, and Tennyson's *Tears, Idle Tears*.

In these and the other essays Professor Brooks is able to shed new light on poems which are both very familiar and often apparently simple. This applies more particularly to such poems as Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge* sonnet (discussed incidentally), where he seems to me to explain most satisfactorily and succinctly the undoubted success of that apparently trite poem. Not all the essays, of course, are equally

convincing: his considerations of the Tennyson poem, Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn* and Wordsworth's *Ode* are particularly interesting, while the essay on Pope seems rather strained. But all are presented with a modesty and absence of dogmatism which are attractive; in no case would Professor Brooks claim that his was a complete and final account of the work in question, or that his reading of a line or phrase was the only correct one. The great danger of his method is that the user of it may be betrayed into over-ingenuity, with the result that what begins as serious criticism declines into mere display of verbal dexterity. Professor Brooks seems to be well aware of this danger, as his careful avoidance of dogmatism indicates, and in the main avoids it, though on occasions even he leaves the impression that he is finding ambiguities where none are intended and, perhaps more important, where insistence on them serves only to blur and confuse.

The more general and theoretic parts of the book, based on the particular studies already discussed, are curiously unsatisfying. One main conclusion, if not new, is acceptable enough—a poem is indivisible and cannot be split up into “content” and “form,” a number of ideas, beliefs, or convictions, expressed in language the main function of which is ornamental.

It is on the positive side that the book is rather disappointing. We are offered such phrases as “The essential structure of a poem . . . is a pattern of resolved stresses,” or “It is a pattern of resolutions and balances and harmonizations, developed through a temporal scheme.” Professor Brooks tries hard to clarify his position by explication and illustration, but I cannot feel he has been altogether successful. Some passages of the final chapter and the appendices are confusing, and, one suspects, confused; and in the final analysis the positive contribution seems little more than an insistence on the fact that poetry is complex and organic, and that if we try to treat it as simple and mechanical we will achieve nothing.

It may finally be felt that there is a touch of speciousness in the way Professor Brooks deduces his theory. He begins (p. 8) with an assertion that “paradoxes spring from the nature of the poet's language” and proceeds to examine a number of poems with this conviction in mind. In his final chapter (p. 179) he refers to the “special kind of structure which seems to emerge as the common structure” of the diverse poems he has been considering, and it is a structure involving paradoxes, ambiguities and irony. It seems fair to say that what finally emerges is very largely what Professor Brooks put in earlier on.

However, though the book may not be wholly convincing in these aspects of its general theory, it is nevertheless interesting and stimulating, and deserves to be read by all who are concerned with the understanding of poetry.

BERNARD J. NOLAN

PORTRAIT OF MR. BERENSON

Sketch for a Self Portrait, by Bernard Berenson (Constable, 10s).

THE fact that Mr. Berenson, at the age of eighty-four, has become a best seller in America would at first seem surprising. Hitherto his published works have been written more for the world of fine arts than for the public. He is our senior art historian and one of the last remaining legendary figures of our day. Once the surprise at his conquest of the book market is over, the realization that *The Sketch for a Self Portrait* is being read by a wide, and one would have imagined, largely philistine section of humanity overwhelms by its encouragement. In the author's own words which he places into the mouth of the common reader, "what can that kind of extrovert, that kind of critic, harsh and ever negative have to say to interest us, in the happenings of his day, his reactions to them, his impressions, his reflexions?" The answer, that appears on each page of his book, is a profound lesson on civilization in general and on the ways of one civilized life in particular. A life that is being carried on despite daily encroaching barbarism and uneasiness at what lies ahead.

The Journal of André Gide first inspired Mr. Berenson to write down his reflections, but this is in no sense a diary, nor does it contain more than a few casual observations that could be termed autobiographical. As our author writes, he was born for conversation and not for writing books and these pages "will attempt to describe in salutary fashion, hop, skip and jump, what he fancies he knows about himself, how he approaches the outside world, what things and people therein have interested him, and how they have been appreciated by him." More than this Mr. Berenson does not do. In conversational fashion correct grammar may be replaced by spontaneity of thought, ideas once started may travel in directions quite contrary to those primarily intended and contradictions in opinion show they need have nothing to do with lack of sincerity. "From the moment I came to believe that I was not going to be a writer, 'style' so called did not seem worth the bother." "My natural way of thinking is by way of a dialogue." If this is then a book of one-sided conversation, we may certainly add, "but what conversation, what an extraordinary level it has attained!"

Strongholds where conversation of the author's class still take place are termed "ivory towers," they compose the much derided never-never land of escapism, that bars out the man who has exchanged "the possible Phidias in him for a Ford." Our author insists on calling himself "a representative figure and no mere freak." If this indeed were true of Mr. Berenson the man, the life he has built for himself is as regrettably scarce as the Auk's egg or the Dodo bird. I remember

once asking the author whether he considered that creators of art lived, and should live, in an "ivory tower." "Yes, thank God," was his immediate reply, "it has been the aim of mankind ever since the amoeba first crawled out of the slime to dissociate himself from his animal past, but only the very rare spirits achieve it by means of music, painting and the other arts. If not to create an 'ivory tower' what other function do the arts perform?" Mr. Berenson here defines an ivory tower "as a house full of books and a garden of flowers." His own structure that he has taken over eighty years to create is precisely this and if he had produced nothing in his lifetime beyond his home and his daily routine, that alone would suffice to make him exceptional. Notwithstanding, Mr. Berenson insists that he squirms when he is spoken of as a "man who has made a success of his life." If he has failed, and only he himself is capable of such a judgment, he has succeeded at least in making something that should be the envy and ambition of every enlightened mortal.

In *Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts*, Mr. Berenson writes that it has been his life work to "live" the work of art. When he gets the full quality of a work of art "at the instant of infinitesimal duration between my seeing it and becoming aware of it," he attains to the state of "Itness." These moments have formed for him his greatest happiness, "instants of perfect harmony" in his long life, and to be capable of that emotion of transported bliss alone means that he has not failed. All the faults to which Mr. Berenson confesses and of which he is so conscious throughout his reflections are the faults moreover of an artist. Impatience, laziness and the conviction—one that even the most prolific artists have always known—that of not having achieved enough during his life, are the lapses to which he testifies. Even if between lines we can discern also a deep-rooted knowledge of his own worth and at times an egocentric outlook, we may be sure no creative mortal has ever succeeded were these supposed defects not added to his virtues. Though we may wish, as Mr. Berenson does, that he had written more, the consoling thought should still come that, by the time spent in collecting ideas, books, works of art and even people, others have profited inordinately, and have been able themselves to produce more abundantly by reason of Mr. Berenson's "laziness."

Many of my contemporaries in painting consider that Mr. Berenson's life of "living" a work of art is already over; that he can no longer judge, have understanding or appreciation of present-day work. To presume that someone, who has studied every manifestation of art form in every period for over half a century, should not be cognisant of what is happening to-day is already an impertinence. The fact that these detractors distinguish between art and modern art would seem

to show their disabilities. The craze for newness in all artistic activities is one of our chief dangers, and if Mr. Berenson judges this newness by the same standard that he applies to works by Signorelli or Sassetta, Matteo di Giovanni or Perugino he is hardly to be blamed. He himself writes that his standards are based on "what survived of the greatest, and best, in fifty years of creative genius." What wonder that the pathetic groupings of to-day constantly fall short of this ideal! Invariably, however, when contemporary works have been brought to him in my presence they have been fairly observed and criticized and an eagle eye has at once traced out their shortcomings or proficiencies. Since he has been one of the first to recognize Picasso and Matisse it is not difficult to understand why their mannerists obtain short shift.

Stones are often hurled also at the "ivory tower." "How is it possible that such a closed 'ideated' life can take in the turmoils and troubles of the common world?" Certainly "not many have gone through life with so few restrictions to their freedom of action, freedom of contact and, need one add, freedom of thought." That, however, is by no means the same thing as turning away from life and refusing to be interested in its perplexities. Few living, even amongst those who encounter the "going on" look in society faces, could claim to have a larger and more widely assorted number of visitors bringing in news from outside. Likewise a new book, on such a subject say as trout fishing, is just as likely to find its place on Mr. Berenson's heaped table as one on Intarsio-work in Italian churches. A knowledge of the world has nothing to do with worldliness any more than "other-worldliness" necessarily has to do with sanctity.

The one important characteristic that does not appear in Mr. Berenson's sketch is the almost impish humour and sense of poking fun that allows him to refer to an eminent curator as "that old eunuch guarding from outside eyes his harem of beautiful pictures." Or again which showed itself at our first meeting when he answered my admission to being a painter by replying "what a tragedy to be an English painter, I only have one English picture in my collection and that, thank heaven, is by a man with an Italian name, Rossetti." This love of teasing is coupled with a love of discussion and of argument even if it means one's disagreeing with him and I hope that love will prove strong enough to permit me to contradict four statements that he makes. The first is, when he writes "on the slightest provocation I avoid meeting people." In nearly all humans the dread of a rebuff, a coldness, which Mr. Berenson says actuates this statement, is linked to an equally strong wish to test oneself, to risk the unbroken ice in the hope of being able to skate away with a new friend. I think the author is no exception to this. Quite rightly he is stimulated by seeing

people as he finds they dispel the sleep that he says simply "oozes out of him." Anyone as interested in life wants to see friends and to hear the news they may bring, perhaps not needing them as a "cannibal" would, the noun with which Mr. Berenson describes one who uses friends solely as a use for themselves, but at least as sharers in a joint feast. But even here the author's ascetic habits are sure to obtrude, since feasting would be revolting to his nature. The very act of eating disgusts him and whatever delicacies may be met with at his table for the enjoyment of others, his own plate seldom contains more than boiled rice or fruit.

The other statements with which I quarrel are all ones which could lead to a lively discussion, but just as the author's comment in making them has been, of necessity, one-sided, so my contradiction must be the same. "Born writers read as little as born painters look at paintings excepting their own or those of their pals." The habits of literary friends would seem to belie this as they continually immerse themselves in literature of every age, saving possibly their own. A painter who looks only at his own works or those of his contemporaries would produce a very poor level of output that could never reach Mr. Berenson's standard. Constable said that a self-taught artist was one taught by a very ignorant man.

Mr. Berenson's "othermindedness," "that makes it almost impossible to adhere wholeheartedly to any exclusive scheme of things" and makes him detest all militarism and "de-individualization," the tolerance and fair-mindedness that comes with age, could never make him adhere dogmatically to his claim that "men in the lump" should be led by means of brutish sounds and skilful use of the lasso rather than by intelligible speech. Though the author may not be a Churchman, every action of his life is part of a religious pattern, a worship of the work of art that he has "lived." Adherence to a particular Church, as to an exclusive scheme of things, would be difficult for him and there is even an occasional vein of the full-blooded pagan traceable in his ascetic skin. "Blessed are they born to a religious and political faith that their mature reason need not reject," yet the author goes on to claim he is still the religious person he has always been.

Mr. Berenson's reflections on religion come in the last section of the sketch that has been divided into three parts roughly composing "youth," "faults and failings" and "old age." These barriers are no more enforced, however, than the author's own judgments. They are rather locks that open and shut at will allowing a trickle through here and a flow through there. The sketch could never have been written by a young man, by one "green" to the wisdom of sages. The ideas eddy back and ripple like the waters in a reach of some great river, that nears its meeting with the sea. Here are no rapids to be shot over, no

bubbling excitable cataract, but rather a broad even flow that knows where it has been and where it will go. One that has become a part of the life that it has found upon its banks, has found it good, and now wants the innumerable young rivulets it has encountered on the way to find it good also.

The grace of Mr. Berenson is in giving a book that all can profit by. As in his life any material gain he may have come by has been doubled and then returned to others, or has been turned into giving pleasure to a multitude of students by the formation of his library, so now are we given the privilege of sharing the ideas that have gone into the making of a fulfilled existence.

DEREK HILL

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEATRICE

An Essay on the Vita Nuova, by Charles S. Singleton (Harvard University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege 16s).

"NOTHING but pre-Raphaelite quaintness," Mr. Eliot found on first reading the *Vita Nuova*; and he bids us read the *Divine Comedy* first if we would avoid the same disappointment. But Dante's key to the little book is *intelletto d'amore*, the understanding of love which he presupposed in those for whom he wrote it. A knowledge of Italian and of the vernacular literary tradition is presupposed too, of course; but especially the power to understand love. So also in the *Divine Comedy*; but less exclusively. For Dante wrote the *Comedy* for everybody, but the *Vita Nuova* particularly for his friends; so that in a sense the *Vita Nuova* is more intimate and "interior" than the mighty satirical poem. Mr. Singleton, in this fine study of the *libello*, rightly stresses the fact (often overlooked) that in it Dante is evidently speaking to his "first friend," Cavalcanti, telling him (of all people) something about love. The question is, what exactly was this information?

One of the merits of Mr. Singleton's work is that it relates the *Vita Nuova* to its "public context," the world that it entered with its strong and subtle novelty. This he does less by adducing sources (indeed I suspect that he makes too much of possible "mystical" sources for a work written when Dante's reading in such things must have been slight), than by juxtaposing the "private" and the "public meanings" of such key-words as *salute*,—which means, respectively, Christ and Beatrice. So we are made aware of the "tension" between the little world of the *Vita Nuova* and the larger (Christian) world which it entered. This tension is far stronger here than anywhere else in the

troubadour literary tradition, because Beatrice is an infinitely more religious and Christian figure than any other *donna angelicata*. Describing her as he did Dante took an extreme risk, though it was not till after the Council of Trent that Authority tried to dilute his daring language in the interests of piety. The attempt was short-lived, however, and this amazing *tour de force* of placing an uncanonized Florentine girl right in the foreground of Catholic art imposed itself. The achievement was so extraordinary that one is tempted to agree with the poet himself that Grace had a hand in it as well as art.

But the role of Beatrice is not easily definable. In the *Divine Comedy* she is allegorized, and the allegory is fairly clear. But the *Vita Nuova* only indicates strongly some *analogy* between Beatrice and the supernatural, which certainly goes far beyond the most that any previous poet had said of his lady, or that Petrarch was to say of Laura, and yet is *also* (and this completes Dante's originality) far more closely controlled by a Christian conception of the Divine. There can be no question of Dante's sincerity; and Beatrice is his way to Heaven; and yet this involves no depreciation of Christ. Two questions then arise, (1) whether what seems extraordinary in Dante's case consists rather in the poet's vivid apprehension of certain supernatural implications of love than in these implications themselves; and (2) what these implications were in his case.

Charles Williams in *The Figure of Beatrice* tried to answer the first question; Mr. Singleton, a better scholar than Williams, deals with the second. He writes economically and very agreeably, but he cannot be read in haste; in a few quiet pages much is said. Chapter 2, for instance, on the Book of Memory is a small masterpiece. Explaining the metaphor given in the *Vita Nuova's* first sentence it shows how the whole book grows out of it: "harking back to that image as it grows," and also how it illuminates Dante's conception of the providential role of Beatrice: he finds her written in God's book of Creation whose meaning, like that of the other sacred book, the Bible, both feeds and transcends his understanding. Here Mr. Singleton's analysis is, I think, decisive and indispensable.

But when he treats directly of the "gradual disclosure" of love and of the "miracle" of Beatrice I feel less sure that Mr. Singleton is always close enough to his texts. He finds that love in the *Vita Nuova* eventually means charity, the transition appearing most distinctly to him in Chapters 24 and 25 where the God of Love is removed from the scene, and love, declared to be now merely "an accident in a substance," is assimilated to Beatrice; who herself, it is implied, has "a certain resemblance to Christ." Now something like this is certainly conveyed by the *libello*, and many of Mr. Singleton's observations on the way this is done, and especially in the subtly gradual character of the

disclosure, are entirely admirable; but I must at least state my suspicion of certain details, since one can hardly do more in a review. The term "charity" is applied, I think, too hastily, without due consideration of the difference between Dante's thought (both here and in the *Convivio* and even in the *Monarchia*) and technical theology. Outside the *Paradiso* Dante does not, I think, speak of *carità*—or *caritas* or *caridade*—with theological precision; he uses the term very little anyhow, and when he does so its meaning is probably bounded by the *recta dilectio* of *Mon.* I, 2 which is simply the love of what is properly lovable (*perseitas*) in God and man. But such a *dilectio* is not necessarily, in theory and by definition, the specifically Christian virtue of charity. Simply to substitute "charity" for Dante's usual term "love" is to interpret the text in a sense that it does not strictly require. Again the term "miracle" needs closer attention than it gets here. If I may refer Mr. Singleton to my article in *Dominican Studies*, April, 1948, he will find there an interpretation of this term, and of the whole love-theme of the *Vita Nuova*, based on Dante's philosophical conception of the "marvel" of human nature as expressed in the *Convivio* and the *Paradiso* in particular. These documents can take one a long way without having recourse to texts of mystics and theologians, of no one of which can one be sure that Dante had read it when he wrote the *Vita Nuova*, and which were all written, in any case, for a rather different public. The poet's philosophy can yield of itself more, I think, than Mr. Singleton seems to suppose.

I have other doubts, but they can wait. Mr. Singleton's essay will bear a good deal of rumination. It is a very sensitive, intelligent and useful little work in the high tradition of American Dante scholarship.

KENELM FOSTER

THE ART OF THE SERMON

Occasional Sermons, by R. A. Knox, edited by Evelyn Waugh (Dropmore Press, 42s).

IT IS a sobering remembrance that at the same hours, all over the world, innumerable good men every week have to preach a sermon. A very great many of them, in the nature of things, are likely to be preaching to the same text. Some of them will no doubt have preached to that text many times before. And yet there they all stand, raised a little above the congregation, and each of them knows that he has a unique occasion before him—the chance, different every day, of dropping exactly the right word among the unresponding chairs below.

Sometimes the sermons are written—generally on furtive little pieces of paper—and of these, some are put away in a drawer to serve

a second time. The very best, perhaps, appear in a printed collection, and sooner or later find their way into the threepenny book-boxes in the Charing Cross Road, or up on the shelves where suitable reading is grouped together for Lenten retreats. And now, among these grave volumes, suddenly appears a stately intruder, bound in Full Maroon Buckram, introduced by Mr. Evelyn Waugh, and looking, from the elegance of its paper and typography, as though it were more likely to contain a translation from the younger Cr  billon than the eloquent felicities of a priest.

A volume of sermons in an expensive limited edition must necessarily find only a limited public: but it may be that Mr. Waugh and the Dropmore Press have chosen this rather unsatisfactory means of presenting a selection from Mgr. Knox's addresses with the double intent of showing that they are works of art as much as of piety, and, furthermore, works deserving the full honours of a hand press. If so, they are right. The eleven occasional sermons to which Mr. Waugh has restricted his choice are, as they are claimed to be, "simple, permanent and luminous." But for that very reason it is to be hoped that a more popular edition will follow, so that their efficacy may be extended beyond the five hundred and fifty privileged persons who alone at present can prove it for themselves.

The occasions are extremely varied. The centenary of Newman's conversion has prompted what is perhaps the most monumental of Mgr. Knox's utterances, and the marriage of Miss Anne Palaret to Lord Oxford the most intimate. Between these two a Coronation, a Dedication, a burial, are marked by further extensions of Mgr. Knox's outstanding gift for transcending a pretext. Thus, the sermons are entitled "Truth," "Homage," "Zeal," or "Heroism"—to take four examples only—simply because the incandescence of a very personal manner is always ready to fire a strong and delicate intellect in order to lift whatever he has to say much above the merely ceremonious. And only once does he succumb to that dangerous informality which lies in wait for the preacher who is also a man of letters and a wit, and then on an excusable occasion: a sermon preached at the Old Palace, Oxford, at the opening of a new temporary chapel.

In general, then, these sermons are exemplary. They are the utterances of a voice placed, quite properly, a few feet higher than its hearers, but never so high as to be out of hearing; they are refreshingly large in scope; and they are cast in a prose which could not easily be bettered for speaking aloud. That they are stored with wisdom and entertainment need not be said, were it not that so dejected an art as the modern sermon is badly in need of the examples which Mgr. Knox provides with such deceptive ease.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

ETHICS FOR INNOCENTS

Morals and Independence: an Introduction to Ethics, by John Coventry, S.J. (Burns Oates 4s 6d).

As usual, it is the sub-title which gives the true description of the book. Fr. Coventry has not written an essay on the conflicting claims of individual spontaneity and the social code, but an introduction to moral philosophy. He simply takes "duty and independence" as a starting-point. Everyone's moral reflection has got far enough to ask: "Why should not I do as I choose?" The author proceeds, as a philosopher must, by analysing the terms of the question asked, with the object of making it answer itself, once it is properly understood. So we are made to consider what is the aim of choice, what duty fundamentally is, and so on. Before we know where we are, we are practising philosophical reflection: we are acquiring an art, and becoming aware that it is its own justification; that it is a proper sort of thinking. Fr. Coventry captures us with the force of truth, and allows it to be its own evidence: the refutation of antiphilosophical or immoralist doctrines plays a wholly subordinate part in his argument.

As soon as I can, I will try Fr. Coventry on some innocents, and see whether he leads them on into philosophy without losing touch with them on the way. My guess, meanwhile, is that he will succeed. He does not use obscure terms, he does not presuppose special knowledge, he writes pleasantly and clearly. And he strikes a happy mean between baffling his reader by leaving all the questions open, and lulling him into a false repose by supplying all the answers.

You cannot, indeed, leave too many questions open if your method is to capture the mind with the force of moral truth: it must be a moral truth, and in fact it is a free and very unscholastic Aristotelianism which takes control in the first four chapters, through a friendly debate with its traditional rivals. Few philosophers are named, except the unfortunate Kant. Kant was a very wrong-headed moralist, but must we go on parodying him in order to refute him? Has Professor Paton's *Categorical Imperative* been written in vain? Nevertheless, these four chapters are both in substance and in manner excellent.

I wish I knew whether Fr. Coventry is an Aristotelian or not. In the first four chapters he seems to be, but in the fifth the position becomes somewhat confused. Aristotelianism, it would appear, is *natural* ethics: but as a matter of fact, our conscience revolts from its intellectualism, still more from its self-centredness: and this, we are told, is a reason for going beyond *natural* ethics and looking for a *supernatural* basis. Surely this will not do. If Aristotelianism is natural ethics, in the sense of "natural" used by Catholic philosophers, the conscience has no business to revolt from it, and the supernatural

order of grace will establish it and not correct it. If a Christian thinker wishes to write convincingly about the borderline between mere natural ethics and the supernatural order, he had better make up his mind what system of ethical beliefs he, Christian as he is, actually holds, and then do his very best to state it as a "natural" system. He may then hope to see where the supernatural really comes in. Aristotelianism should not have been allowed to triumph so easily on the natural plane: it is there that the reader should have been exercised in the discussion of its claims.

The last chapter of the book handles with great discretion (a) the puzzling concept of Natural Law, (b) the duties of State and Church as moral guides. It is a pleasure to find a moralist so emphatically setting incorporation into the divine life above moral guidance as *the* moralizing function of the Church.

About one point of policy I cannot make up my mind. If we are writing an introduction to ethical philosophy, should we take account of the somewhat specialized logical approach to moral studies which at present reigns in the Universities? It is a hideous complication for the beginner: but if we say nothing about it, and his friends keep talking it to him, may he not write us off as back-numbers? Fr. Coventry, anyhow, has decided to let it alone, and he is, as I trust we have allowed it to appear, a very sensible man.

AUSTIN FARRER

THE ENIGMA OF SALVATION

The Salvation of the Nations, by Jean Daniélou (Sheed & Ward 6s).
The Richest Vein: Eastern Tradition and Modern Thought, by Gai Eaton (Faber & Faber 15s).

PÈRE DANIÉLOU's book in French has the word *mystère* in its title, and why this key word was omitted in the English translation is itself a *mystère*, for it is essential to the discussion. God has not chosen to reveal to us the secrets of His dealings with souls, and when He was asked straight out, "Lord, are they few that are saved?" His only answer was to tell the questioner to strive that he should be. The author is perfectly conscious of this insoluble element in his problems, but sometimes in speaking of it he raises even darker mysteries which he does not trouble about at all. That two-thirds of the human race should still, after nineteen centuries of heroic missionary endeavour, be living outside the Christian revelation is a terrible fact to face for any man who takes his religion seriously. "All this is explained," writes Père Daniélou, "in the divine pedagogy through which the

Word prepared humanity little by little to receive in its fulness the message He came to give. In the beginning, He took humanity as it was, like a child, teaching it what a child can grasp, and bringing it only by slow degrees to an understanding of greater mysteries. It is very important for us to meditate on this method of God's, because it will help us better to understand what our own missionary attitude should be; we should not be impatient, but be able to contemplate the unfolding of this divine plan, to admire it and worship it in its mysteriousness and in its progressive development, meanwhile trying to hasten its fulfilment in every way we can" (p. 28).

That passage, we respectfully submit, explains nothing and leaves a great deal out of account. The divine pedagogy of which it speaks is itself an inscrutable mystery. Why should God be so slow? Why should the leaven of divine grace, hidden first in Judaism and then in Christianity, take so long to activate the whole mass? There is here surely a mystery of iniquity as well as a mystery of providence. It is not so much that the workings of God have been slow as that the hearts of men have been obdurate:

He does not forsake the world,
But stands before it modelling in the clay
And moulding there His image. Age by age
The clay wars with his fingers and pleads hard
For its old heavy, dull, and shapeless ease. . . .

It is a grave fault of this book that it argues, as it were, *in vacuo*, without regard to historical circumstances. To take a single instance, the Portuguese record in India is so heavily blotted with cruelty and hungry imperialism that it is hardly surprising to find less than one per cent. of the population Catholic to-day. The age of the great maritime discoveries was, like our own, one of rampant nationalism, when the single idea of the conquistadors, Spanish as well as Portuguese, seems to have been the creation of new Spains and new Portugals in the track of their conquests, without the slightest regard for the venerable civilizations on which they had intruded. Inevitably, in the minds of the Hindus to become a Christian soon meant to become a Portuguese, and against such an identification their self-respect and pride of race naturally revolted. When Robert de Nobili made his heroic experiment of "de-Europeanization," he met with immediate success among the pagans, but also with immediate and bitter criticism from his fellow-Christians. The same thing happened to Matthew Ricci's pioneer work in China. All the golden promise of the harvest-field cultivated by the new methods was blighted and ruined by the abominable "Rites Controversy," which for a long period spelt the doom of the missions among civilized peoples. Now it is necessary to start again along the

lines so carefully laid down by de Nobili and Ricci three hundred years ago. This is precisely what Père Daniélou pleads for in his book, but in too abstract a fashion and without the good red blood of historical fact to give point and punch to his arguments. "At bottom," he writes, "what keeps India away from Christ is pride," and that is perfectly true, but he should have added that, at least in the past, the pride was not only India's; it was Portugal's and France's and England's also.

The lack of historical perspective in the book is made the more apparent by what might be called its unmitigated futurism. Now, the problem of the salvation of the nations bears not only on the future, but on the present and on the limitless past —

For the innumerable dead
Is my soul disquieted.

That disquiet was felt acutely by the Japanese converts of St. Francis Xavier, as he has himself recorded: "Before their baptism, the neophytes of Yamaguchi had serious doubts as to whether God was infinitely good, for He seemed to them wanting in mercy because He had not revealed Himself to them before we made Him known. And if it was true; as we said, that all who adored Him not went to Hell, then He turned a deaf ear to the piety of their ancestors, since He abandoned them to damnation without granting them knowledge of His existence." Père Daniélou might reasonably reply that it was not his purpose to deal with the question as a whole, but in that case he should not have barred the way to any mitigation of its burdensomeness by such unqualified assertions as that "there is a non-Christian heroism, but there is no non-Christian saintliness," or that "sanctifying grace is obtained only through Baptism and is the privilege of those only who possess Christ in His plenitude." The first of those propositions depends, of course, on the second, and that second, which bolts and bars the gates of mercy on mankind, has no warrant whatever in Catholic theology. On the contrary, it has been, at least equivalently, condemned. "God forbid, Venerable Brethren," said Pope Pius IX, addressing a meeting of the bishops assembled for the Vatican Council, "that we should dare to set limits to the divine mercy, which is infinite . . . It is, indeed, to be held as of faith that outside the Apostolic Roman Church no one can be saved, . . . but nevertheless it is similarly to be believed as certain that those who are invincibly ignorant of the true religion will not be held accountable for this in the eyes of the Lord. And who may take to himself so great an authority as to be capable of designating the extent of this ignorance in view of the immense variety of circumstances which affect the lives of men in their physical environment and intellectual development?

When, after death, we shall see God as He is, we shall in very truth understand by what a close and beautiful bond the divine mercy and the divine justice are linked together . . . The hand of the Lord is not shortened, and the gifts of His heavenly grace will by no means be wanting to those who sincerely desire and pray for their light".¹

It was Lenin who declared himself ready to sacrifice fifty million men for the accomplishment of his utopia, a fine offer to Moloch honoured so religiously by his successor. A Catholic could not sacrifice one single black baby to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth. Every human soul, no matter how undeveloped or degraded, is an absolute value, and Piltdown man, no less than his atomic-age successors, has a right to theological consideration, for, as has been well said, all the countless generations of mankind are equidistant from eternity. The Sacraments are indeed the normal means for the acquisition and increase of the divine life in men, but God is not bound by them and can operate their effects without them. May not His infinite mercy and love have resources, not seven, but seventy times seven, for the salvation of the nations? But if God is free, we Christian people are not, and woe betide us if we neglect any means in our power, particularly that of prayer, to ensure that the Sacraments are put within the reach of our pagan brethren. The rest we can safely leave in the hands that were pierced for the cave-dwellers of thirty thousand years ago no less than for St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Pius XII. As for the possibility of saintliness outside the visible unity of the Church, it is a matter of evidence and the evidence exists. Père Daniélou refers in passing to the celebrated case of the Moslem mystic al-Hallaj who was crucified at Baghdad a thousand years ago in circumstances closely resembling the Passion of our Blessed Lord. This great unbaptized man practised the theological virtues in an heroic degree, which is the definition of saintliness, and he gave his life for a doctrine of union with God through love hardly to be distinguished from the teaching of St. John of the Cross. Nor is he an isolated instance of non-Christian sanctity, for Ibn Abbad of Ronda, a Spanish Moslem of the fourteenth century, not only became a pattern of every virtue himself but a famous director of others in the way of holiness. Referring to this man, the editors of the authoritative *Études Carmélitaines* wrote as follows in their issue of April, 1932: "D'aucuns pourraient objecter qu'attirer l'attention sur les beautés de la mystique musulmane risque de porter préjudice à la conversion de l'Islam. A cela nous répondons: puisque ces beautés existent, la vérité exige qu'on les reconnaisse et ne pas le faire serait donner de s'en servir contre l'Église, alors que celle-ci, selon les principes de la plus saine théologie, doit les reconnaître pour siennes." Père Daniélou is very generous in his appreciation of

¹ Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, nn. 1647, 1648

the religious values inherent in both Mohammedanism and Hinduism, and our only quarrel with him is that he seems to rule out too definitely the good and orthodox hope expressed in the maxim, *Facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*. Nothing precludes us from interpreting the last word to mean sanctifying as well as actual grace, for the one gift is as much in the power of God as the other.

The second book, *The Richest Vein*, is also a work of the greatest interest and bears out in many respects Père Daniélou's contentions. But Mr. Eaton works from the opposite direction and would have us seek in Hinduism and Buddhism for light on the diseases which afflict our own Western spiritual heritage. Hinduism is certainly a fascinating subject of inquiry. "I have a yearning towards Hindoos," wrote Father Gerard Manley Hopkins to a Catholic friend in India in 1872. "Write about Brahmins, write about Rajpoots, write about Vaisyas, write about Sudras. Be detailed about Benares, be minute about Allahbad. Dwell on Vishnu, enlarge on Juggernaut. Develop caste, describe Shuggee. Be long, be lengthy, be voluminous, be tedious . . . If you tell me that you know Sanscrit I go April-green with envy; if you say that the Mahâbhârata is your toast-crumb ordinary breakfast book, I am jaundiced all marigold under the eyes . . ." In a most refreshing and brilliantly argued introduction Mr. Eaton joins issue with our modern Western illusions of progress. "An unparalleled freedom, in thought if not in action is the gift, turned burden, of the modern age . . . For centuries there has been at work this process of levelling out the ruts in which human thought and action once moved, and now that their traces are almost erased, we enjoy, unprotected, the liberty of a pathless desert." In a few well-wrought sentences, this fine thinker and writer shows the hollowness and materialism of Professor Toynbee's much vaunted challenge-and-response theory of history. One modern superstition after another crashes at the touch of his urbane logic and beautifully integrated learning. "Every schoolchild knows of the persecution to which the early scientists were subjected; he has heard all about the wicked reactionaries who struggled to keep mankind in bondage and ignorance, when the age of light and freedom was dawning, and he has been told—for the retailing of such absurdities enlivens the history lesson—of the dire prophecies made by the representatives of the old order in the face of every one of those inventions and advances which led, in ordered progression, to the glorious present day. He may, in later life, become sceptical concerning the true value of the achievements he was taught to admire, but his schooling effectively screens him from thinking of those old prophets except with derision; they were discredited, those prophets, for no thunderbolt fell from on high to strike down the impious pioneer or heretic; but then the mills of God grind slow." In saying this Mr. Eaton is not

trying to belittle science itself as a legitimate human activity nor to deny the material benefits which its pursuit has brought to mankind. He is directing his shafts at the camp-followers of the true scientists, the Drapers, the Whites, the Burys, the Wellses, all the little dead and damned busybodies who cherished the funny dogma that because a medieval man read his books by candlelight, he must somehow have been an inferior creature to ourselves who have electric bulbs.

Perhaps in his spirited defence of tradition Mr. Eaton sometimes shows himself too much of a die-hard. He strongly deprecates any interference with the tribal customs of primitive peoples or with Indian religious practices. Would he, then, advocate the revival of Suttee, and is he entirely opposed to government action against the witch-doctors of Africa? Pushing the argument to its extremity, ought we not all to start painting ourselves with woad again? But the warning which he gives is not invalidated by such possible exaggerations. It has been proved dangerous again and again to lay rude hands on traditional patterns of life, especially when this is done in the name of Western civilization, itself now such an absolute mess. Mr. Eaton's purpose in expounding so brilliantly the wisdom of the East is not to make us Westerners embrace Hinduism or Buddhism. What we may reasonably hope to come to by study of Eastern ways of life and thought, he says, "is a growing understanding of the foundation upon which the life of all traditional human societies is based, the foundation upon which our life in the West was once established, before, in the pursuit of the mirage of a material heaven on earth, we broke loose and became a wonder and an abomination to the rest of the world." Here he joins hands with Père Daniélou who also stresses the eminent religious values of Eastern religions, particularly their sense of the unique reality of the spiritual world, an error, but a noble error. "Asia," writes the Jesuit, "is like an immense monastery, merely waiting to put its aspirations at the service of the true God." Though not a Catholic, nor even, it would seem, a Christian, Mr. Eaton is in profound sympathy with the Catholic Church and sees in her "the main source of hope for the Western world." What he has against her is the absoluteness of her claims, which, following his mentor, the great anti-modernist René Guénon, he would himself concede only to a certain Universal Tradition lying at the root of all religions. Catholics, too, believe in a primitive revelation, in a "true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world," which, did Mr. Eaton study as thoroughly as he has studied its refracted rays in Hinduism and Buddhism, he would assuredly find focused in Jesus Christ our Lord. He has already come a long part of the journey to its radiance.

JAMES BRODRICK

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